

**THE TEXT IS
LIGHT IN
THE BOOK**

**THERE IS VERY LITTLE
MARGIN BETWEEN THE LEFT
AND RIGHT PAGES**

947.084 S41
Keep Your Card in This Pocket

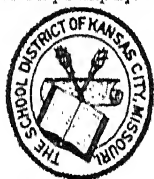
Books will be issued only on presentation of proper library cards.

Unless labeled otherwise, books may be retained for four weeks. Borrowers finding books marked, defaced or mutilated are expected to report same at library desk; otherwise the last borrower will be held responsible for all imperfections discovered.

The card holder is responsible for all books drawn on this card.

Penalty for over-due books 2c a day plus cost of notices.

Lost cards and change of residence must be reported promptly.



Public Library
Kansas City, Mo.

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

BERKOWITZ ENVELOPE CO., K. C., MO

KANSAS CITY, MO. PUBLIC LIBRARY



0 0001 0358841 4

DATE DUE

8 Aug 37
10 Aug 37
EB 26 42

SEVEN YEARS IN
SOVIET RUSSIA

PAUL SCHEFFER
SEVEN YEARS IN
SOVIET RUSSIA

With a Retrospect

Authorized Translation by
ARTHUR LIVINGSTON

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1932

Contents

PART I

PAGE

BUSINESS, ART, RELIGION, DAILY LIFE

Chapter I. MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG . . .	3
„ II. ART AND COLLECTIVISM . . .	20
„ III. THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE . . .	30

PART II

SOVIET ECONOMY: FROM NEP TO FIVE YEAR PLAN

Chapter I. THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT . . .	51
„ II. ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES . . .	87

PART III

MEN AND PRINCIPLES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Chapter I. THE FIRST TROTSKY CRISIS . . .	115
„ II. STALIN'S VICTORY . . .	156
„ III. END OF THE OPPOSITION . . .	186

PART IV

RUSSIA IN EUROPE AND ASIA.

Chapter I. THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL . . .	217
„ II. RAPALLO AND AFTER . . .	223
„ III. LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY . . .	241
„ IV. FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS . . .	258
„ V. THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA . . .	272

Contents

	PAGE
PART V	
THE FUTURE	291
PART VI	
RETROSPECT	
Chapter I. GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA : BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU AND MALTZAN	301
„ II. AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN	335

Preface

THE JOURNALIST IN SOVIET RUSSIA

The chapters of this book are a record of the author's seven years as a journalist in Soviet Russia. They will be found to give a picture of Soviet Russia in a chronological form ; they may be thus of value to the future historian of the Soviet Union.

The author believes that the course of the destinies of the Red Empire has hitherto been determined by certain definite laws, and that its future course, down to the final decision as to whether it is to perish or to endure, will continue to be determined by these same laws. These laws have revealed their operation but very gradually, though ever more and more clearly. The close of the year 1929 brought open war against the Russian peasantry, which had hitherto been free. At the same time Stalin proclaimed the end of the "New Economic Policy." These acts were the final demonstration and the open acknowledgment of the laws referred to. The author and his articles fell with these acts like ripe apples from the tree of Soviet knowledge ! At the moment when what he had been fearing for so many years became a fact, when, at last, the NEP finally broke down, return to Soviet Russia was forbidden him "because of articles that had been increasingly unfriendly over the past three years."

The conditions under which newspapermen from foreign countries have been working during this time in Moscow give a fairly accurate picture of the general trend of events as a whole ; and, on this ground alone, it might seem permissible to enter here upon this aspect of life in Russia.

At the beginning the Soviet authorities looked with favour upon foreign visitors whom they regarded as well disposed. For the misery and destruction which lay about them they did not consider themselves responsible. Their comprehensive programme for the future justified everything in their eyes. Much more noticeably than is the case to-day they were looking ahead

PREFACE

with quiet consciences. Since it was always possible to talk in high spirits of what was going to be some day, the reporter was given lavish permission to see the unpleasant side of things; and, in fact, the revolutionary optimism of the Régime was, on the whole, contagious. Moscow read with eager curiosity everything that was published abroad in those days—much as a débutante in her first evening gown may study herself in a mirror. The Foreign Department of the “Tcheka” (later called the G.P.U.) read all foreign clippings systematically. So did the Comintern, and, less thoroughly perhaps, the over-worked Commissariat of Foreign Affairs—the “Narkomindel.”

However, beginning with the NEP in 1921, the press department of the Foreign Commissariat was strengthened in personnel and thoroughly equipped. For some time it felt its way cautiously along; though by 1922 there was a regular censorship over newspaper dispatches. Just as cautious was the supervision of newspapermen—where they went, whom they saw, what they did. This general situation corresponded to the attitude of the Soviets prevailing toward the bourgeois world at that time, when the guiding idea was to create and strengthen the belief that the Soviet government was a government like any other, and, rather than not, a liberal government.

In 1923, Theodor Rothstein was named chief of the Soviet Press Department, and at the same time a member of the executive staff of the Narkomindel. Mr. Rothstein had for years been employed on the reportorial staff of the *London Daily News*. The language of the educated cosmopolitan, the enlightened liberal, the humanitarian even, he could talk, one might say, in his sleep. The correspondents then resident in Moscow—the group, as a whole, had a predominantly English and American colouring—worked very much under the influence of the optimism prevalent in ruling circles, and especially in the old Russian bourgeoisie (so far as the latter had been taken over into government employ). Almost everyone believed, in accord with a widespread tendency, in the practicability of the NEP. The atmosphere, in a word, was peaceful, though signs of coming storm were not wanting. Two journalists were barred from the country during this period. It is significant that one of

PREFACE

them had dealt with the religious persecutions which the Soviet government was then conducting, but in a relatively inconspicuous manner.

That the censorship was stiffening, with some ups and downs, was however obvious ; though not till 1926, to my knowledge, was any serious complaint voiced. At that time Mr. Litvinov gave a tea to foreign newspaper men at the "Narkomindel." A master of dissimulation (as, for that matter, at speaking the baldest truths), he declared, during the conversation, and with every evidence of astonishment, that the existence of a censorship was unknown to him. Thereupon the correspondent of the *New York Times*, Mr. Walter Duranty, invited Litvinov just to turn to his right where "the gentleman in question" was sitting ! "Oh," answered Litvinov, "you can hardly call that censorship. That is just an effort to protect you gentlemen from misinformation in your news."

Such the caution with which the government was then manœuvring ! During the same year the author of this book was restrained from sending a despatch on the unfavourable forecasts for the Russian harvest. The interference came in the form of a "request" from Mr. Rothstein that "in view of certain circumstances," he delay the article two weeks.

Thereafter the atmosphere changed rapidly. Both Party and government set enormous hopes on the revolution in China, and they ceased to feel the deference they had been feeling toward a bourgeois Europe now standing on the brink of collapse, and, correspondingly, toward journalists from bourgeois countries. It would be hard, furthermore, for anyone in the West to imagine what expectations the people at the Kremlin conceived from the coal strike in England. In 1927 came the accounting with England, the raid on the Arcos, the rupture of relations. These episodes stimulated all radical tendencies in the Soviet Union and drove them to the surface. For months and months Moscow lived in fear of war, and the censorship became utterly rigid. By the time that worry passed, Stalin's struggle with Trotski's Left-Opportunity and a sudden sharpening of the tension between town and country, made it necessary to thicken the fog that was lying between the Red experiment and the West.

PREFACE

The fist now began to make itself felt more perceptibly under its glove of velvet; but there was also an increase in the subtlety with which the press authorities strove to create abroad an impression that the Soviet government was not afraid of the truth. From then on the journalist in Moscow had to become master of a new art: the art of telling three-quarters, a half, still smaller fractions, of the truth; the art of not telling the truth in such a way that the truth would be made apparent to a thoughtful reader: or conversely, the art of telling the whole truth up to the point where its negative or positive significance would become apparent. And if such arts were easy to learn, that was due in part to the assistance lent by the censorship! Sometimes, to be sure, the red ink would be bluntly drawn through an unpleasant fact; but the censors were usually most fertile in suggestions of compromise and casuistry which would protect them and still quiet the reporter's conscience as regarded his readers. Arguments were an everyday affair in such connections; and to win them the censorship employed many devices.

A favourite one was to shake the reporter's confidence in the accuracy of his information. Another was to delay official approval of a despatch till the reporter, pressed for time, would finally accept the wording proposed to him. There was not infrequent bargaining of one piece of news against another; though in such bickerings the reporter invariably lost.

In spite of everything, however, the conflict became more open, the friction more constant. Insistence by the censorship on what it euphemistically styled "loyal sentiments" on the part of newspapermen has to-day been pushed to extreme limits. It always contains, of course, an element of implied menace. For two years past, as reporters in Moscow know only too well, an employee of the Press Department has been assigned exclusively to the "criticism" of their publications, and actually to "book-keeping" in the matter of "loyalty." It lies in the nature of such police supervision that a reporter's debit-sheet automatically grows to over-reach his credit account, unless he take heroic measures to preserve his favorable balance. Things have recently gone so far that reporters trying to get some unpleasant news past the censors are met

PREFACE

with the remark that certain other reporters have been "loyal enough" not to mention the matter in question!

One must bear in mind, of course, that these all but scandalous conditions arise not so much from the bad will of the censors as from the increasing bad will, so to speak, of the conditions prevailing in the Soviet Union! At any rate, the "Narkomindel" itself has come to the conclusion that the innocent explanation which seemed good enough to justify the existence of an "examining officer" in 1926 no longer suffices, despite the greatest willingness on both sides, for the situation prevailing in 1929. In an official reply to a reporter's application made early in the summer of the latter year, Mr. Rothstein flatly and plainly declared that considerations of State and nothing else determined just what the censorship would allow to pass. This served at least to clear the atmosphere! It signified the end of a situation which for a long time had been balanced with the greatest skill on a razor's edge.

The activity of foreign correspondents in Moscow is hampered more seriously by the indirect, than by the direct, censorship that is laid upon them; and the indirect pressure is the real cause of the extraordinary, and extraordinarily wearing, tension under which they live. How strong this indirect pressure is may be seen from the fact that though what correspondents actually write may not be subject to censorship, their reporting is done (save in very special cases invariably generating scandal) within the limits of what the censorship allows. This results, first of all, from the general sense of police pressure that pervades the country—"police" in the sense of G.P.U., which will be glad to have this testimonial to its efficiency! But there is also the fact that foreign correspondents are being systematically excluded from the life which the Soviet Union is leading—they therefore produce less, and the work of the censorship is made easier!

After the break with England the G.P.U. made thousands of arrests all over the Soviet Union, and the arrests especially affected people who had had contacts, direct or indirect, with the English Mission. The remnants of the Russian bourgeoisie at large became convinced after that, that any contact whatsoever with foreigners was dangerous. In this direction the isolation of

PREFACE

foreign correspondents, and in fact of all foreigners, in Moscow is now complete. It is easier for transient than for resident aliens to come into contact with the native population. In fact, certain Russians are actually encouraged by the Soviet authorities to entertain visitors or show them about—but not more than once! One might suppose that the correspondents would seek acquaintances within the Party, and that the Party on its side, would welcome such a thing in its own interest. But as early as 1926 it was made the duty of all Communists to report their conversations with foreigners to “the competent offices,” where their “intercourse with foreign elements” is itself made subject to review. As a matter of fact, any prolonged association of a Communist with any foreigner whatsoever requires special permission from the Party. On the whole the Party does not welcome the presence of foreigners within its spheres of activity, and the same taste is shared by the G.P.U. This, of course, does not prevent the Soviets from feeling a certain satisfaction at the curiosity, or thirst for knowledge manifested by foreigners whom they consider influential or rich. Resident foreigners who are in a position to make systematic observations are looked upon, however, especially by members of the younger generation, as a danger to the prestige of the Régime. Official intercourse with them, these young men feel, compromises the class struggle which has been carried on incessantly for years now. The foreigner’s attitude of self-possession, his higher standard of living, and the same things, especially, in the servants and employees of foreigners, are feared as dangerous object lessons when compared with the miserable living standards of the average Soviet citizen. As regards the G.P.U., its mistrust, and its corresponding mania for imagining “combinations” (for which it rarely takes the trouble to test the evidence) have increased to incredible heights in all directions. It spares not even its own members, and not even those highest in command. It is, beyond a doubt, the most abnormally minded police force that has ever existed on the face of the earth, and for that very reason incalculably dangerous. It was the G.P.U., more than anybody else, which brought the isolation of foreigners from native Russians to its present—and as I have said, unbelievable completeness. To give just a suggestion of its methods:

PREFACE

some months ago the G.P.U. began arresting every person visiting the German Embassy, and at the Embassy's very door. Of course, the arrests were eventually declared "mistaken"; but they involved several days of searching examination for the victims concerned. In November, 1929, the "Narkomindel" filed a complaint because an expert from the German Legation had delivered before the foreign correspondents a critical lecture on the agricultural "Collectives." The G.P.U. submitted in evidence certain passages from the lecture, which, delivered before just that audience, it regarded as a counter-Revolutionary enterprise! It has steadily tried to prevent any form of association among foreign correspondents, such as would be taken for granted in any other capital city in the world. It knew perfectly well that the lecture in question was to be the prelude to regular meetings of the kind. The nervousness of this high authority has recently become so great that Mr. Rothstein, in deference to the G.P.U. (and out of consideration for himself), has refused, even with a show of temper, to receive correspondents in groups and even representatives of groups incidentally formed for dealing with special occurrences of importance.

The Narkomindel—at the instance primarily of the "authorities of the Interior"—has also been waging an underground war on Russians working in the employ of foreign correspondents. Some years ago the secretary of the correspondent of the Associated Press was exiled to Solovki, because, as Mr. Rothstein explained, "he had been neglecting his family." And other forms of pressure are used. When the author of this book was denied re-entry into Russia, his secretary, his messenger-girl, and a Russian professor who had been friendly with him—all persons of unquestionable loyalty—were thrown into prison. The purpose here was probably to give another "healthy example." But, for that matter, it has long been the practice of the "authorities of the Interior" to arrest wholly or in part the service staff of foreigners about to leave the Soviet Union permanently.

In 1928 began the very characteristic procedure of intimidating correspondents with threats of withholding their

PREFACE

re-entry visas ; and since 1929 the right of a resident correspondent to demand a re-entry has been in principle denied. Another favourite trick, used against newspapermen from the United States as well, has been to let the man " feel the displeasure " with which he is regarded by delaying the issue of the re-entry visa. In the case of German press representatives stationed in Moscow this refusal of re-entry visas is a brazen violation of the " Settlements' Agreements " of 1925. Still another device is for the Soviet Government to lodge complaints against a correspondent with his home office, going " over his head " ; and, sad to relate, not a few men have either been reprimanded or discharged because of the naïve trust of their superiors in the official character of such representations.

The spics and " provocateurs " whom correspondents, whether or not they are aware of being watched, have to put up with, are usually men from the G.P.U. I know of one case only where an employee of the Press Division of the " Narkomindel " established familiar relations with a correspondent for the purpose of compromising him later on. But another fact is notorious. To isolate a correspondent who has fallen into disfavour through his despatches and to justify further measures against him, untruths even of a personal nature are circulated against him by the Narkomindel. Inter-course between foreign travellers and newspapermen is watched with uneasiness, and the uneasiness has only increased as conditions in the Soviet Union have grown more tense. Transient tourists are subjected from the first to a Soviet propaganda which is managed with great skill through the Press Division of the Foreign Commissariat. It is perhaps only natural that what such tourists hear from independent resident observers should be checked up with what they have been officially told. " Residents," of course, so far as Moscow is concerned, are, with rare exceptions, diplomats, or, precisely, correspondents of foreign newspapers !

G.P.U. and Party to-day control even the official censorship and the attitude of the " Narkomindel " toward the correspondents accredited to it. In Soviet Russia, as is often the case with Foreign Offices elsewhere, the Narkomindel frequently

PREFACE

plays the rôle of scapegoat for other government offices ; and one must admit that under present policies it has every reason to insure itself against eventual drubbings by making inquiries in advance at the proper places. Last year, for example, the Narkomindel was forced by the Party to make energetic diplomatic representations, after the fact, concerning a newspaper report which had been stamped by the official censorship and passed without more ado. The more serious the situation of the Party has grown during these last years, the bitterer have its personal animosities against individual newspapermen become ; and hatreds against such men, fomented now by one group, now by another, within the Party, have been fanned by the Soviet press in a most unfair manner. So it came about that an employee of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, who has for years been functioning acrobatically as diplomat, G.P.U. man, Party member, and secret agent of the Comintern, all at once, filed an official complaint against the despatches of a German correspondent who, for good reasons, had never touched the topic which he was alleged to have treated in a " disloyal " manner ! The incident would seem to prove that the Party had been lying in wait for him, and had arranged for the protest in advance !

One might imagine that under such conditions it would be impossible for a journalist to work in Soviet Russia. Yet, the fact is, that hardly anything of paramount importance takes place within the Party that does not, sooner or later, leak out. An impenetrable cloud has been drawn about the walls of the Kremlin ; but the unslackening tension with which the whole population fixes its eyes upon that cloud enables the public gaze to penetrate it in the end ! News from the Kremlin spreads with incredible speed from Moscow out over the whole country, much as news travels through the primitive jungles of Africa. Facts are altered but slightly in transmission ; for truth has become a luxury in Russia, and everything possible is being done " on top " to maintain its value. Even the slightest indiscretions are severely punished.

But the actual exclusion of many Party members from deliberations in which they have a right to participate, and then again, jealousies, vanities, the spirit of opposition, are always

PREFACE

provoking a sheer need of "talking" even within the immediate circle of the few who rule. Add to this the fact that during all these years the victims of open and secret oppressions and brutalities have grown in number, along with the difficulties which beset the government. The misery of Russia cries aloud on every Russian street. Bewilderment and despair open many mouths. The foreigner in Soviet Russia wanders about in an invisible cage ; but only a few never learn to hear and see !

PART I

BUSINESS, ART, RELIGION, DAILY LIFE

CHAPTER I

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

RENAISSANCE

(Moscow, November 8th, 1921.)

To arrive at the station in Moscow and drive away into the town is to experience a pitiful shock. It has always been reputed bad taste to remind the unfortunate of their misfortune. A glimpse of this city, and such unkindness would seem impossible. To be sure, the world at large has learned, under the tutoring of four significant years, that Energy and Will continue to abide here; that from this spot startling ideas, momentous thoughts, are daily being hurled at the civilization of the West. But that is not what one sees at first sight. At first sight this wondrous town is battered, shattered, crippled unto death! These people? They are dwellers among ruins, dumb to the historic significance of the ruins among which they dwell. What, in fact, have these crumbling walls to say to them? At the most that they might fall and crush them!

But no! That first glance was hasty, superficial! There is life, stir, bustle, here! The practised eye readily detects the signs! Two months ago these shops were not open! This moving-picture theatre is now being run by a private owner! The lighting in the streets is better! The people on the sidewalks seem to have business to attend to—there is no more aimless loitering! Hope is stronger than the depressing environment. Indeed, my gasp of alarm may seem incomprehensible here, where a new stage in Communism's fight for life has opened.

In St. Petersburg, they say, one walks about as in a museum. Everything is in plain view—there are few mysteries to fathom. Not so, Moscow! Moscow is alive, with a multiple, many-sided life, and it fascinates in so many peculiar ways that one soon abandons the search for comparisons. One thing is certain. The longer one looks, the better one's impression grows!

Moscow, November 8th, 1921

SOVIET RUSSIA

For two months past there have been shops and stores again. They are concentrated in the traditional "business section" of the city. The old firms are rarely functioning on their former sites, though proprietors and clerks in the stores are often the same. Buildings of all sorts are now common property. They "belong to the State." Shop space, therefore, must be rented from the government. A host of taxes and tariffs have appeared with the resumption of business, and the license to trade itself is high. In spite of such obstacles, these enterprises are flourishing, especially the grocery stores and other purveyings of staples. These are the most numerous and the best stocked. They are always crowded with customers. The offerings in other stores are meagre, laughably so, if one could laugh. Only left-overs from earlier stocks are on sale, "odds and ends," soiled and shopworn, which the owner, lucky in spite of everything, has managed somehow to save among all the vicissitudes of these past years. It is apparent to the eye that all contact with foreign countries has been severed since 1918, and with foreign markets since 1914. The places of honour in the show-windows (these not always clean) are often occupied by objects which in other days would hardly have been offered for sale. "Free trading" is evidently in its very beginnings.

If Moscow, if Russia, were really as hard-pressed for the daily necessities of life as would appear from the impoverished state of these show-windows, stores would soon be closed for sheer lack of anything to sell. One is forced to the conclusion that importing is being managed somehow, through one channel or another, now that business is picking up again. Probably, also, the merchants are not showing all they have. In fear lest the new regulations may not be permanent, they are taking no chances of seizure with their very last reserves. On the whole, a conviction is growing that "free-trading" is here to stay and is destined to develop in spite of the restrictions and difficulties that beset it at present. The "open markets," where retailing was formerly practised in such strange and picturesque forms, are already losing importance. The public that buys is again turning instinctively to the stores. Bargains in "job-lots," which were still whetting the greed

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

of foreign speculators a few months ago, are again finding normal distribution through the retailers. Trade in staples is progressing rapidly and in every conceivable form, though speculation in securities, foreign currencies, and jewels is still strictly forbidden.

Worry lest Russia be finally "sold out" is incomparably greater here than the similar dread in Germany. In the latter country the merchant senses behind him a gigantic capacity for production on the part of the nation. That stimulates and facilitates business. Such confidence is lacking in Russia. Individuals, here and there, are trying to revive industry, and a few small factories, employing very few workers, are opening again on a basis of "free-trading." But resumption of work in the great plants under private management (which does not by any means imply private ownership) is still complicated by so many regulations and conditions as to be very difficult if not impossible. Things, in this connection, are still in flux; and it would be unwise to draw conclusions from this or that detail without reference to the general economic policies of the Régime and to the theoretical considerations of a political nature which determine them. It would be a great mistake to infer that the Government is tossing its social theories overboard and returning to "free trading" and private ownership, pure and simple. That very issue is now at stake in the struggle between the parties. Everything depends on whether Lenin retains the upper hand against the forces favouring private enterprise—as he bids fair to do!

THE OTHER MOSCOW

(Moscow, December 4th, 1921.)

Moscow, in fact all Russia, has been almost completely cut off from the rest of Europe for years. Even now, at the beginning of the new era, echoes from the "bourgeois" West reach this land of the East so faintly as hardly to catch the ear. The foreigner newly arrived is met by everyone with a starved intellectual curiosity and a personal friendliness which are a source of joy indeed; and he quite easily feels, after a few days, that he has really settled down here, that here he stands on a firm footing. Almost too readily does he accustom himself to

Moscow, December 4th, 1921

SOVIET RUSSIA

the evidences of destruction or decay that attend him on every hand. He overlooks the tumble-down houses that disfigure the busiest streets, and the huge numbers of broken or badly mended window-panes. He grows resigned to letter-boxes that receive no letters, and to the impossibility of buying a washbasin or a pair of gloves. He freezes in a fireless room as though that were the natural order of things. The fact is that Moscow is leading an intense intellectual and spiritual life, and in this domain she affords the stranger a warmth and a comfort that are so notably, even so repellantly, lacking in material things (in material things the visitor is incomparably better situated than the native Russian).

Nevertheless, from time to time, you stand thoroughly bewildered as one impression is rudely thrust out of your mind in favour of another. By day, Moscow looks like a fairly modern city with, of course, a few points of historical interest, but consisting chiefly of apartment houses, office buildings, not a few private dwellings of the middle classes, public buildings of most sombre aspect, and then churches, churches, churches, all in a gay, somewhat naïve style (to complete the picture, add that everything is in bad repair). But, one night, on driving back into town from a suburb, I could only rub my eyes and ask myself whether this were the same city! Predominant now over the vast impersonal expanse of dark structures the phantastically articulated masses of the churches! They seem immeasurably aged! In the dark of the night the "Chinese Wall" comes to life for the first time in all its hugeness. The gigantic towers at the portals loom threateningly, unsoftened by the adornments that strive to make them more amiable.

And there is the Kremlin, no longer a "two-star feature" in my Baedeker, but a stronghold guarding the solitude of the present-day masters of Russia!

Once brought back in this fashion to the Medieval, and the Oriental, significance of Moscow, one can never escape from the impression. The Kremlin is in very deed "the castle"—the "citadel." In new mood and feeling one remembers the endless corridors in the barracks within its walls where children play about as in streets, where there is a going-and-coming of servant girls, and an all-pervading odour of cooking. Away up

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

there, in that many-storied wing, lord and master is Lenin; and in the rooms about him, live his friends, colleagues, and co-workers. To be sure there are telephones and electric lights. But despite that, it is all a plunge back into a primitive, patriarchal manner of living and working. All the ministries and department offices are being used as veritable homes where people live and cook and eat, amid a general confusion. Only in Trotski's bailiwick is there any trace of the modern ideas of system and organization. An atmosphere of Medieval days, and at the same time of racy folkishness, pervades the Bolshevik environment. The power that is to-day ruling Russia with the utmost self-assurance and ruthlessness is something old-fashioned as compared with the last century of Tsardom. Though the present Régime would create the most up-to-date vehicles of power, power is uniformly conceived in such terms of personal absolutism that to grasp it one must think back to the year 1700 or 1600.

This must be taken into account if one would understand the Bolshevik State as it actually is, and speculate as to its future. No doubt the problem of adjustment to what is real and actual in Western democracy, and especially to the "efficiency methods" of production under Capitalism, is regarded by Moscow as the great problem—and the enduring problem (once it failed of solution in the first onrush of "thorough-going Communization"). In this connection the present rulers of Russia are thinking in terms as modern as possible. They know that Russia stands in need of up-to-date economic leadership, and that their own fortunes are intimately bound up with their ability to provide it. Their problem is as elementary as the one that confronted Peter the Great, though it is a thousand times more complicated. The resolve to retain power and use power is, therefore, more outspoken among the people of the Soviets than anywhere in Western Europe, though absolutist tendencies are observable enough in some of the victorious nations of the West. And there is something "Old Russian" in all this. In the task of bridging the gap between a backward country and the civilization and wealth on which its future depends, these men are determined to make up for their scant following by personal energy and application.

SOVIET RUSSIA

It is a question of a drastic determination looking far ahead and which, like any despotism of feudal days, feels itself strong enough to reach its goal regardless of the energies it must spend and the mistakes it may make. In this civilized world of ours such a display of determination and energy would seem to be possible only in Russia. And so the Soviet leaders themselves think. They know their Russia, and they know their Kremlin!

The Kremlin has its own calendar, its own system of reckoning time. Anyone lodged in the Kremlin eventually falls in with it!

SAINT PETERSBURG IN DECLINE
(Leningrad, late February, 1922.)

"*La Russie est ruinée, Monsieur!*" To hear a truth repeated over and over again in the same words is tiresome; but misery is too universally the rule in Russia to cause any sensation other than weariness.

In the corridor of my very European sleeping car, I note the Leningrad Ballet. They have been dancing at Moscow! They look tired, and are evidently poor, but they are still spirited enough! And there are two young Commissars, in undress uniform, with leather boots (oh, the power of Communism!). For the rest, a number of "speculators" of most recent breed—in modern Russian "profiteers!" There is a halt at some distance from St. Petersburg. The track is blocked! A breakdown in the locomotive of the train of the day before! Two nights on the train, without lights, cannot have been very pleasant for those people!

The contrast with Moscow forces itself upon the eye in the very sheds of the Nicholas Station. These two cities, the only ones which could rule Russia and which have actually ruled Russia for centuries, are now exchanging rôles. How important that fact is for Russia! How important for Europe! During these past years Moscow has been undergoing fundamental changes and is still changing. St. Petersburg is a new city, or is becoming one! I am not speaking contemptuously.

In the station no such crowds as at Moscow! A few, too few, sleighs that may be hired! Three official automobiles,

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

two of them evidently belonging to a foreign consulate! Leading straight into the heart of the city, the Nevski Prospect, still a gay and alluring vista, as broad as the Neva itself, and lined with palaces, churches, public buildings, all in perfect condition! Business houses, now, but with the firm names gone! They were torn off in 1917, like epaulettes from the shoulders of degraded officers! Considerable movement on the sidewalks! The weary and heavy-laden populace of a great city, mostly from the lower, or lowest, classes—a metropolitan populace now without a metropolis! Not a single push-cart, such as may be found on every corner in Moscow, with bread, bonbons, *papirosi*—cigarettes! Here, now, some “new” stores! Russia, as ever, is one great junk-shop. It is one general “sell-out” at second-hand! Nothing, absolutely nothing, that is new! Here, too, considerable activity in necessities and staples, though of the bakeries authorized during the past autumn a good third have failed. Window displays are on the whole more “prudent” than in Moscow, and the clerks more cowed (so it was in Moscow three or four months ago)! Many millinery stores, with articles of female adornment now fetching high prices, and evidently drawn from secreted stocks (corresponding to this, in Moscow, a deluge of perfumery in every store, likewise produced from hidden reserves)! Second-hand selling, chance bargains! I examine the outfit of a large variety shop in some detail: porcelain umbrella-holders; riding-whips; writing materials; blotters *de luxe*! A reflection: the market for these things no longer exists: gone the purchasers of 1917, gone the people, their manner of living, their needs! Similar reflections are easily suggested in all Russia by wholly commonplace but ever recurring details! A flower store, and on a corner lot! Cyclamen, nothing but cyclamen—white cyclamen! Most surprising! In Moscow, the universal flower was a wilted frost-bitten aster! A little nook at least in the Tsar’s conservatory at Tsarskoe Selo must still be getting fuel!

Now we approach the great squares along the Neva. It is about three o’clock. Two or three spots on the expanse of white snow: two or three people out of doors, that is! Around noon time, the closing hour, these two or three become a

Leningrad, late February, 1922

SOVIET RUSSIA

crowd, a fairly respectable crowd ! That marks progress ! For, a year ago, St. Petersburg was dead ! However, for new arrivals in the city, such "progress" is only another reminder that five hundred thousand people, a people become terribly, incredibly, frugal in a capital conceived in luxury—cannot fill this city, which counted more than two million souls in the year 1914 ! In Moscow, to-day, crowding, and over-crowding, to a point that terrifies ! In St. Petersburg, a languid emptiness ! Emptiness is the word, emptiness is the thing, that relentlessly pursues and depresses the city, its inhabitants and every transient whom it shelters. In Moscow a housing, problem ! In St. Petersburg a housing problem even more dreadful !

My goal is a branch office of the Foreign Commissariat. It is located in one of those sumptuous ice-cold buildings with the gigantic stone fronts, which Banking and Finance, growing more and more conscious of their power, were erecting in many places in the city just before the War, in contrast with the stucco and plaster of the Tsars. The office does not occupy the whole building—far from that, even though several foreign business Commissions are quartered with it ! Looking out upon the street from the waiting-room, one observes that there are just two types of houses in St. Petersburg. One of them is the house with all its windows open from ground floor to eaves—and the temperature is at ten degrees below freezing ! A building that is "busted"—"gone to ruin !" The waste pipes have given out, and the floors, one after the other, beginning at the top, have been put to certain purposes of Nature with very unhygienic effects. On the ground floor a rain-washed, snow-covered sign : "*Basil—Coiffeur et Parfumeur.*" He was one of the most fashionable !

Near by, another sort of house : a spacious sometime residence ! The sashes of the windows, gaping in long rows, are piled high with snow. Behind them the frost and weather are doing their silent work of destruction. The stranger, at first sight, does not grasp the meaning of such "blind" windows. When at last he understands, he cannot get them out of his mind. Everywhere in the city they quietly, systematically proclaim : "Deserted," just as in other days one

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

might have read: "For Sale" or "To Let." The motif, as it were, of St. Petersburg's peculiar drama! Solitude, unuttered confession of misery, a silence that is more cruelly eloquent than the actual ruins one sees—an occasional skeleton of masonry, or the bare timbers of a frame building—so ironical, these, in a city that is frozen deep and is ever hungry for warmth!

Rooms actually inhabited are colder and more uncomfortable than in Moscow; for houses are in use only in parts—certain rooms, or certain floors, and heated therefore only with emergency stoves (like the Tsar's greenhouses)! The worst of Russia's present-day housing evils, the revolting lack of drainage, is at its height in St. Petersburg. But in this as in all other respects "one gets used to it!" Water pipes everywhere have frozen and burst; though not till spring will the full ravages of frost within the walls make themselves evident. Indescribable the cold in the huge public buildings which in days gone by were regularly over-heated. Even in summer a chill stubbornly lingers within their massive walls of masonry. Here is the old German Embassy. Its crumbling reception rooms are now stacked with coarse suits of clothing, that were sent in years ago, for the use of returning prisoners of war. The slabs of marble in the floors have all cracked from frost. There is much moving in this uninhabited city. When a structure shows signs of wear, much simpler than to repair it is to leave it to its fate and find "a better one!"

In this deserted wide-spreading city persons and property are less safe than in Moscow. A month ago the situation was serious. There were nightly "hold-ups" on the streets, and even in private houses, and they were sometimes conducted by individuals of good breeding. There were cases where all the people on a floor would be found murdered. The authorities dealt with the matter energetically. Quarters specially affected were surrounded by police, and all persons found on the streets after certain hours were arrested. One or two plausible suspects were speedily brought to trial and executed with effective publicity. The remedy seemed to work. Since then the streets have been safer. But a walk home at night, after closing time at the theatres, is still accompanied by

Leningrad, late February, 1922

SOVIET RUSSIA

most disquieting wishes of "Good luck!" from one's hosts.

Electricity is still available, as in Moscow. What is absolutely indispensable for daily needs is still being produced—in particular, therefore, rubber footwear, manufactured by the State. The point is noteworthy! However, the city government is not in itself able to maintain street lighting (the poles, for the most part, stand crooked and askew—one of the many indications that something has happened to this exquisitely rectilinear city). Another astonishing paradox, accordingly: a public service carried on by private initiative! Every hundred yards, I should say, there is a light in front of some entrance door—the ostensible entrance, that is; for, as in Moscow, most houses are entered only by the "back-stairs," the ones leading up from the inner court. Often the lamps are burning. But they are old-fashioned incandescent bulbs which cause a terrible waste of current. Leftovers, again! Though this is not the only respect in which Russia is learning how expensive poverty can be.

The old incandescent bulb is lighting a ruined city, but not a city of ruins. No Scipio of to-day could find here a decrepitude adequate to symbolize the sunset of a modern Carthage! There is something awe-inspiring in the architectural indestructibility of St. Petersburg, in the perfect preservation of the endless façades and colonnades that line the Neva and the beautiful squares. Perfect in spite of everything! Public buildings recurring every now and again dominate the scene of this artistically well-planned city. They are all in a dignified official style, ornamented with the wreaths and rosettes of the Empire. They stand undisturbed, every one of them, though the might that created them has vanished for ever! Life all about is struggling with poverty, distress, and the relentless enemy, Cold. Every face wears the marks of care; yet these buildings, erected to proclaim a splendour and a power of two centuries' duration, still seem to be doing their duty! As one stands on the Trotski Bridge and gazes along these lavishly conceived water-fronts, the spectacle may fade, as it were, into the dream that such imposing façades do not really hide an inner emptiness. Save that Memory is there to awaken us in a tremor! Over there, on the other side of the

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

Neva, lies the little white villa that once belonged to the mistress of Nicholas the Second—a dancer! There, in the summer of 1917, Lenin made his day and night harangues to the mobs that day and night crowded thither to hear him!

A MUSEUM OF THE REVOLUTION (Late March, 1929.)

Enter the Winter Palace and you are certain to encounter at least one surprise that will leave its impression upon you: several rooms in the basement (one of them a prison-cell without windows) labelled: "The Revolutionary Movement in Russia," beginning with the Dekabrist! Just that exhibition in just that building—the palace of the Tsars!

To judge by appearances, the collection cannot be very rich in documents, in some regards; in others, notably as to Police and Court records, and archives of the departments of State, the showing is better. Table after table is spread with papers—a mere suggestion, I am told, of what the future may reveal—just the portion that has so far been examined. Incredible, however, the numbers of secret documents that have fallen into the hands of the new Régime! The Old Government not only compiled a detailed history of its antagonists with all the "sources" named: it was just as thoroughgoing with its own.

What strikes the casual visitor most forcibly is the pictures. Here is a great oil canvas by Verestchagin, painted not from historical reminiscences, as were his pictures of 1812, but with all the quivering and shuddering of an eye-witness. It portrays to the life the execution of the murderer of Alexander the Second—a gray stormy morning in winter, the gallows blending into a maze of whirling snow.

Then there is the "rogues' gallery" of Revolutionists. Strange—but they all look alike! Intellectual, over-spiritual faces, all, broad high foreheads, prominent skulls, heads in which any hope might find its habitation! Rarely the virile, four-square type of the conspirator. Always, always that same silent, meditative, ethereal determination, nourished on tea-drinking, which insisted on the sacrifice of life—one's own life—as the highest and noblest duty! Products of the

SOVIET RUSSIA

Russian petty-bourgeoisie, that powder-magazine on which Bakunin and Marx were to fall like lightning-bolts! This type has now all but vanished from Russia (as, indeed, from Europe). Pictures from the Revolution of 1905 already show materialistic proletarian heads. Trotsky is perhaps the one exception. His keen intelligent face looks, in all that outfit, like a survival from another age! And yet—it is a deceptive picture. The leaders of the later, the greater, Revolution show the modern *bourgeois* in their faces; but they descend in a straight line from that ancient stock of ghastly melancholy.

In one of the cheap (to-day ridiculously cheap) antique shops on the Nevski Prospect (who is there to buy such books?) you might still find some of the hundred original copies of the "Account of the Socialist Movement in Russia, 1879-1887."* One of them, a copy presented by Mme. von Giers to Count Lamsdorff in the year 1895, is just now in my hands. The Party which issued this pamphlet, whatever its grasp of the facts, had never at any moment the slightest comprehension of its opponents. Its slashes always cut sharply and cleanly! But, of all those who fought and fell, who was not of *bourgeois* origin? Hardly one! You may find there, for example, Lenin's elder brother, Ulianov, who was hanged in 1883. He taught his group that the battle should be fought "only with weapon in hand"! To the same group belonged the Pilsudskis, one of whom went to the scaffold, and another to Siberia for three years—on his way to the Presidency of Poland! And the book runs on, to a host of unfathomed destinies.

Now, so far as the deep-lying roots of the Revolution are concerned, the exhibition in the Winter Palace and those hundred copies of the "Account" are perfectly understandable. But to understand is not so easy after the decay of *bourgeois* education, *bourgeois* power and (let us not forget) *bourgeois* comprehension, that began in 1918. People still young, boys and girls who can have had no possible memories from days and things gone by, are to-day being eliminated from factories where they have long been working because

* *Chronique du mouvement socialiste en Russie, 1879-1887*, edited by Shebekov and published by the Ministry of the Interior.

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

of "*bourgeois* outlooks." In Leningrad everything *bourgeois* encounters suspicion at every step, a mistrust that effectually prevents any mutual confidence, any enduring co-operation. Leningrad has remained a city deeply divided against itself.

THE CITY

(Leningrad, late March, 1929.)

Under the Tsars Saint Petersburg was always the most European of cities ; and Leningrad remains to-day the city in Soviet Russia of greatest interest to Europeans. Under the terrible shock of the Revolution it became, and indeed at the time of my first visit in 1922, it still remained, a deserted ruin—a cracked and crumbling shell embracing a maze of empty rooms ! One or two shops, at the most, were open—March violets, as it were, of the "New Economic Policy" ! After dark the broad squares and the streets along the canals were all unsafe. To be sure the statue of Alexander the Third already bore the inscription *Pugalo* ("Scarecrow") ! But that was about the one visible trace of a future ! The whole town was one great "Scarecrow," though it was a deeply-stirring, a deeply-moving, spectacle : the first landmark of the decline of our modern age and social order, the first warning of our inevitable doom !

By 1925, however, the New Age, the age of Bolshevism, had installed itself in the ruins. There were still deserted houses, deserted streets, deserted quarters (especially the old aristocratic quarters), where the ghosts of the past continued to shiver and moan. There was still no trace of prosperity or splendour. But there was life about, unmistakably so. Slowly, with the dawn of the day promised by the "New Economic Policy," a host of private shops had reopened with ambitious displays. There was no end of theatres and restaurants. A very respectable traffic was to be noted on the Nevski Prospect. Bureaus of the Soviet Government were frequent everywhere (though their names, composed of the initials of long titles, were not always as musical to the ear as one might have wished).

Perhaps the spring thaw is not just the season to select, if one would get the most favourable impression of a city.

Leningrad, late March, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

It is dispiriting, nevertheless, for the eye to fall, the very first thing, upon hundreds of people standing in line in the mud and slush in front of the stores. That is just what strikes the eye in Leningrad, in this month of March, 1929. They stand there all day long, and even late into the night; and on the secondary as well as the main, streets. I have arrived at a moment of "panic," I am told—as a rule, things are not so bad! There are reports that sugar, salt, kerosene, and even soap, are giving out (reports from where?). Freight and train services have been disorganised for some reason—temporarily, without a doubt! To be sure, bread has been on ration for a long time . . . ! Part of the uneasiness is caused by bad news from the rural districts; and the peasants, who come into town complaining and grumbling, make matters worse! Leningrad is surrounded by a great belt of famine that begins not more than fifteen miles beyond the city limits. Almost all the states of the North from Pskov to Ustysolsk are in the same or a worse plight. But panics start in Leningrad on the flimsiest pretexts! And what wonder? Two-thirds of these people have lived through the bad years, the great years: 1918, 1919, 1920! That is why the town is full of rumours now—rumours about everything and everybody! Safety valves of fear and anxiety! Those on top, the Party at large—they are not worried! They have strong and steady nerves! They are going straight ahead, with this city! Many of the stores have closed again—in the business section of the Nevski Prospect alone thousands of them are empty. The restaurants can be counted now on the fingers of one's two hands. They are all "proletarian *Stolovayas*" (taverns) and belong with rare exception to one large corporation. Of the hostelrys famous in other days only one is still suitable for habitation. It has a restaurant and other conveniences. But it is even less bourgeois than it was three years ago. In Leningrad as well as in Moscow the Party's extremism is the order of the day: the whole city has put on the uniform of Communism. One feels in the air the all-pervading influence of a relentless aggressive will. Now this is something quite different from what the "New Economic Policy" promised—the "NEP" as it was in its genuine essence, and not, as it is to-day, mere

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

hurry on the part of individuals to earn a day's living, or else mere impatience on the part of the rulers to arrive at Socialism.

The trend towards Socialism, in fact, seems to be more marked in Leningrad than elsewhere. To be sure, a newcomer from Europe arriving here for the first time, might interpret the present situation as a transition from Communism to some freer form of economic life. Actually the trend is in the opposite direction. Retrogression from the NEP, a stronger and stronger grip of Communism on things it had hitherto spared, is apparent in a thousand ways. Leningrad is greyer and gloomier than usual not just because of the spring thaw! Great collectivistic and (we fear) bureaucratic business enterprises are determining the outer aspect of the streets. The show-windows offer one monotonous display of articles (in no great quantities) all toned to a single standard of living. As in Moscow, street traffic on wheels has fallen off noticeably. There is a terrifying sameness about the people on the sidewalks. Have the old crowds, one wonders, melted away or been submerged so suddenly? In a positive sense all this represents simplification, concentration of business procedure. In a negative sense it means that life is creeping ahead only by constant coaxing on the part of the government.

But Socialism makes itself felt most strongly in the matter of housing. The city is growing in population. And yet, such silence! Of course, there must be all the more activity in the houses! For a long time after the war, Leningrad was the one city in the Soviet Union, not to say in all Europe, that had an excess of dwelling space. But shortly many buildings became unserviceable either because they were left deserted or because they were used by people entirely without means. The increase in population amounted, meantime, to 150,000 annually, while the annual capacity of the city for construction was only 90,000 square metres of floor space. Two-thirds of a square metre for each new arrival! In the year 1928 two thousand families had to be sent away and settled elsewhere. Now the tenants of habitable houses are being crowded together. Housing is being "communised"; and at the same time, there is talk (here as elsewhere) of expelling the politically

SOVIET RUSSIA

disenfranchised from the city. "Communization," therefore, is being forced by practical considerations (similar cases have been not unknown in Germany). But all this is a step forward, from the view point of "class-levelling." The obliteration of distinctions in residence by housing in common is one of the strongest instruments for obliterating distinctions of class !

In very truth this city, draped in such tragedy and gloom, has not remained as a dead heritage from vanished Tsars and departed splendours. It is being kneaded over ! Those "at the top" have never dreamed of leaving it as a pallid memory of the past ! A sharp-eyed Swede once remarked that "Leningrad without a ruling class would be a farce !" If only its breath hold out, Leningrad may really attain to complete proletarian uniformity ! Such a thing is already conceivable. Around the factories, old and new, on the outskirts of the city, a new civilization, purely and deliberately proletarian, is growing up—theatres, clubs, schools, charities, resorts, of a very special, and a specially self-conscious sort ; and in this framework, which must first round itself out in its own good time, a new species of men and women, not fully formed as yet but wilfully moulding itself, is coming into being. These people are working their way toward the centre of the city which they laid waste some years ago. A sublime, however elementary process, rigorously controlled and guided by a few brains ! Surely it would be worthy of description by some great epic poet ! For this seizure in detail of wealth, after the conquest in quantity, is not by any means a painless thing. The upstarting of this new Russia in Leningrad has its counter-balance in the voiceless misery that still dwells in old Saint Petersburg.

Of all this the only sign visible to every eye is the "selling out" of the old city. Saint Petersburg has become an antique-quarry, a curio-gusher, a mine of the arts ! The State took all it could. It could not take everything—far from that ! There was too much there ! The pre-War Russians betrayed their nearness to Asia in a passion for tangible treasures (*real* values, Europeans here have begun of late to say) ; and they betrayed their love of Europe by stuffing their gorgeous, sumptuous, comfortable houses (to-day they all smell of cats) with huge

MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

quantities of art objects, now in good taste, now in bad, from the West. How much of these old splendours will remain to the Soviet Union? The treasure house has been pretty thoroughly rifled since 1920! Latvia and Esthonia were the first outlets towards Europe. But with the proclamation of the NEP came hordes of buyers from England, Scandinavia and Germany; and they went through the magnificent mansions of the wealthy of the old days guided by the sometime owners now in tears, people to whom matters of luxury, taste, fastidiousness, had become utterly meaningless after the nightmare of the preceding years. The bidders not infrequently bought in gross lots, without looking at what they were buying in detail; and moving vans would transport across the frontiers in a few days treasures in furnishings and art objects which it had taken generations to assemble. Great brokerage and selling agencies were organized by the State—the first one under the name of the Red Cross! From month to month, from year to year, the greed of the foreigner (and of late the enterprise of the State Commissariat for Foreign Commerce!) has come closer and closer to the bottom of the barrel! One need hardly say that the quality of the goods has gradually fallen off! Looking over the battlefield to-day, one is tempted to remark that a battle has indeed been fought, and lost, by Russia!

CHAPTER II

ART AND COLLECTIVISM

THE MEYERHOLD THEATRE
(Moscow, December, 1926.)

Meyerhold has just served the public with Gogol's "Inspector General," with a Communist sauce. "Served" is the exact word.

With a "revolving stage" we have already become familiar. Here we have something new: a picture-frame stage, in a new tridimensional sense of that term. The stage is set in full view of the audience, but in a three-quarters' darkness. What one sees as the curtain rises is a half-circle of fourteen doors, opening towards the orchestra. Just as the play is about to begin, the doors fold back to make room for the "picture-frame" (I can think of no better word for it). It is pushed forward, from back stage, with all the required properties in their places. Thereupon the actors leap into the frame, the foot-lights are turned on, and the dialogue starts. The stage at large represents the world. The "picture-frame," about the size of an old-fashioned show-wagon, rests upon it, as part of the world. It stands at a fairly high elevation. The sides fall straight to the floor of the stage; but its own floor—a most essential point—slopes toward the orchestra. This slope is not just a practical necessity (without it, many spectators would fail to command a full view of the actors); it helps to create an illusion of perspective, as in a painting; and this effect is heightened by the "picture-frame" itself, which is set off in contrast with the stage as a whole and is comparatively narrow, occupying perhaps a fifth of the curtain width.

In this way the usual "stage-picture" becomes a "picture-stage"—a possibility hitherto unforeseen in scenic theory. It certainly makes an impression of strangeness. In the case of the "Inspector General" at least, I found it interesting

ART AND COLLECTIVISM

and stimulating. It held one's attention. Perhaps the charm would work off, when one grew accustomed to it. At any rate, scenic directors in other countries should take note of this discovery, which seems to have had a precedent only in the ancient theatre. Undoubtedly it has technical advantages. The "picture-frames" are shoved to right and left and rolled back on steel rails laid in curves, till they meet the central track which will carry them forward on the flat stage proper. On the sloping stage belonging to the "frame" there is room only for the indispensable properties. They contribute most powerfully to creating the illusion of a picture.

In this discovery Meyerhold has exhausted the extreme possibilities in scenic concentration. For that matter, he does not stick to it pedantically. The bribery scene in the "Inspector General" takes place on the flat, the large, stage, the men who bring the money appearing through the doors in the original half-circle. In the reception scene, the various "individuals of importance" stand in the half-light under, and to the right of, the "frame." At another moment, the "frame" is simply wheeled away and the action takes place on a normal stage, to the full width of the curtain.

In his earlier settings Meyerhold essayed the precise opposite of all this in a manner no less extreme. He gave a play called "Surrender, Europe!" The wings virtually disappeared. They were folding-screens on wheels and were shifted about with lightning speed. One scene was in preparation, let us say, on the left of the stage, while the preceding had not yet ended on the right. Then again a scene would begin in a closed room, and the closed room would suddenly become a public street—a "flattening out" of the stage in all directions. Now this was a revolutionary theatre. A definitely bounded stage with fixed wings no longer held the monopoly of illusion—the latter was, one may say, diffused, made all-pervading, without any certain prop anywhere. It was even torn to shreds, and quite recklessly, when, for example, the most grotesque of the characters suddenly bobbed up in the orchestra beating time for a jazz band, while Europe stewed and boiled to pieces in front of him!

SOVIET RUSSIA

One need hardly note that the extreme "flattening" sought in "Surrender, Europe!" and the extreme concentration attained in the "Inspector General," are one and the same thing. But the public did not rack its brains to any great extent in either case. Indeed it ignored Meyerhold's theatrical technique almost altogether. His rendering of Gogol roused the wrath of all those who still look with reverence upon the Russian poetry of the past. There are evidently more of such people than there seems to be.

The Meyerhold Theatre is the theatre of official Communism, and Meyerhold is its prophet. He has eyes only for the future. He denies bourgeois art, among other reasons, because it "belongs to the past." What he did with "The Inspector General," or rather what he did to "The Inspector General," moved the Party's poet, a man exquisitely educated but, unfortunately, in the old school, to call him, in an old-fashioned epigram, the "murderer of Gogol"; while another critic, of unquestionably orthodox Sovietism, attributed the play to one "Gogolhold"! In fact, with blatant disregard for Gogol, Meyerhold replaced old characters in the play with new ones. The Inspector General is provided with an accomplice. The servant Ossip is made thirty years younger, and can therefore be enticed by the Burgomaster's wife to a rendezvous. The Burgomaster himself is not just a man sunken in shame. He goes insane, and we have the pleasure of seeing a strait-jacket on the stage. The famous curtain scene, which portrays a paralytic, was staged with genuine wax dolls! In this poverty-stricken Russia where a school-teacher receives half the salary that was assigned to his post in 1914, 75,000 roubles were found for this production; and the only purpose they served was to make the Inspector General such a commonplace individual that his inner workings were no longer of the slightest interest, and to make the society which looked up to him so vulgar that all the wit vanished. It was again a question of bourgeoisie. Since Gogol was a bourgeois so much the worse for him! He too must come down off his perch; for if any good were left in him, it would redound to the advantage of the bourgeoisie!

ART AND COLLECTIVISM

Such a theatre deliberately and systematically serves the class-struggle, and therefore, as I firmly believe, it can essay nothing better than caricature. In "Surrender, Europe!" bourgeois Europe is promised that multiple burden of woes which, in our time at least, happens to have fallen only to the lot of Russia: the extermination of a whole class in a national population; then hunger, with a consequent cannibalism. The United States is the artisan of all this suffering; and what further we see of the United States, in the play, is nothing but vulgarity and commonness. "Roar, China!" shows the English at work, Englishmen such as history has so far never known. "The Mandate," for its part, portrayed the Russian petty-bourgeoisie as the usual conglomeration of idiots. Such have been Meyerhold's outstanding productions during these past years, "The Inspector General," the latest of them! During the World War we learned that a passion for destruction is inseparable from a passion for defaming one's enemies. Everything shown to the proletariat in this great theatre expresses the will to destroy under form of degradation for someone, be it even some Tsaristic clique in a remote province of Russia a hundred years ago!

Nowhere during these past nine years has anything been proposed under guise of art to the sovereign people of Russia save this devastating negation, voiced in the grossest terms. Where, in fact, is the constructive, the affirmative opposite of all this—the ideal of the Communist, I mean, who is entitled of right to take the place which the bourgeois unjustly usurps? Where is the genuine Communist who derives his sentiments from the masses only, has feelings for the masses only, and problems only within the proletarian orbit? Where is the "new man," the man made according to the present-day prescription with a new head and a new heart? This new human being, the Communist human being—doubtless because he still has two legs and one heart and not, as yet, twenty thousand legs and ten thousand hearts—appears very rarely on the Soviet stage, and even then for never more than ten lines. Yessenin, a lyric genius, has been the one poet of these years of alternating storm and calm to touch on the theme of the Communist. But Yessenin portrayed in tragic terms only

SOVIET RUSSIA

the peculiar, the individual, filth of his own personal tragedy. Then he made his bow and—ran off!

The incompleteness of her victory, as yet, prevents Soviet Russia from having any positive art—this must be one explanation of such nihilism. Another might be the compulsion the Soviets seem to be feeling to force everything to propaganda, even be it the philosophy of mathematics. This same fullness of void, at any rate, pervades the plastic arts in Russia to-day no less than music and the novel. The "activism" of the Revolution still holds absolute sway, and its materialism does the rest. For Meyerhold, at least, action is everything, the human being nothing, or at best, just a puppet swept along by events. His actors are much better trained as to their arms and legs than as to expressiveness of feature—their faces are mechanical, blank, and are intended to be so. Wit is a tolerated, sensitiveness a forbidden, trait. It might seem interesting, accordingly, to note how such things express themselves. They express themselves in an omnipresent caricature, a cult for the grotesque, a feverish pursuit of parody characters, which begin with God the Father and run all the way down to the Inspector General. We may, of course, concede that such a thorough-going amputation of our European prejudices and provincialisms in matters of art may be preparing the ground for something new and great; and we must also admit that nine years are a short time for laying foundations so momentous.

In the meantime, in no country is the need for censorship so great as in Soviet Russia. No book review may be printed here unless Marx be taken as a criterion. No non-Marxian book may be published unless it be provided with a Marxian introduction (more likely it will not be published at all). One need not remark that free-thinking is not allowed—that it is dangerous for anyone who tries it. Under these circumstances the prognosis for art in this gifted land is not favourable. Youth is a mighty influence anywhere. But a new kind of youth has conquered this country, and nowhere has youth ever been so powerful, so assertive, so logical and so destructive, in the realms of the spirit. Only the technique of stagecraft seems to have won freedom from the Great Revolution!

ART AND COLLECTIVISM

THE TOLSTOY MEMORIAL

(Moscow, September, 1928.)

On Tuesday evening some eighty persons from many parts of the world left the Kursker Station for Krasnaya Polyana, taking berths in the newly-furnished sleeping cars that make travelling so comfortable in Russia. They were pilgrims to the Tolstoy memorial celebration. Many of them were foreigners who could hardly have been aware what a remarkable thing, in this land torn by the struggles of Communist thought, such a pilgrimage to the tomb of the one Christian prophet, the one true evangelist of our day, had to be. Most of them doubtless thought they were paying honour to that same Tolstoy whose figure is cast in imperishable bronze in all the countries of the West. But in this realm of a new Gospel, a gospel that tolerates nothing which does not echo its own Word, the medal of that gentle, that mighty zealot, has to be recast. Tolstoy and Communism! What different things! What contrary things!

We were a jolly company, such as we were—unfortunately Gorki lay seriously ill in Moscow. But where were the “moderns,” those new “Freeman of the Pen” of Soviet Russia, the members of that guild to which Tolstoy, the artist, and even to-day the greatest artist of Russian birth, belongs? Let us not press the question—it might prove embarrassing! But what had become of that German (just one German at least!) who might have pronounced a greeting to Tolstoy? And what had become of all the famous names from the countries abroad—Hofmannsthal, Unamuno, Galsworthy, Hauptmann? One of them should have come—one of them would have come! Perhaps they were invited too late?

We drove from the station in motor-buses. At one point along the road a peasant's team shied at the autos, and ditched the wagon. Evidently the new age was still new enough in the region for the horses not to know how to behave! But I liked the incident! It seemed to bring back the good old days in Yasnaya Polyana when pilgrims and sightseers used to drive out here in little dog-carts, whether pilgrims or sightseers, their hearts a-beat because they were about to stand before the great Tolstoy!

Moscow, September, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

From a hill top, towering high above the green forest that hides the historic house, rises the new school—a school for farmers, principally. Alexandra Lvovna, the youngest of the great man's daughters, and the only one of his children still living in Russia, is there to welcome the guests. A proud creature, intelligent! She looks you straight in the eye! About her stand a crowd of young people, boys and girls, from Tolstoy's village. They are well mannered, and well dressed. I did not find them the pale, underfed, unhappy lot they were afterwards described as being in a paper at Moscow!

But the ceremonies are under way. Lunatcharski calls the meeting to order in front of the stage of a little theatre in the auditorium of the school. He pays a formal tribute to Tolstoy, and proceeds to hand over the school to its future mistress and to the community. When he has finished he turns and shakes hands with the Countess. Other speeches follow, from representatives of the town and representatives of the government, good Soviet speeches, repeating a little too often—I cannot refrain from saying—exhortations to the assembled guests to combat the lies and slanders current in the bourgeois world as to the cultural policies of the Soviet Union.

Dedications are seldom entertaining, so far as the formalities go. But in Soviet Russia, things are still too unsettled, too fraught with struggle and action, for even such a peaceful meeting, so far from controversial in character, to take place without fireworks. The Countess Alexandra Lvovna remarked, in her reply, that the Soviet government, in deference to Tolstoy and his convictions, would refrain from "militarizing" the school and from devoting it to atheistic propaganda. Lunatcharski was on his feet at once! The Soviet Régime, the government of the first Socialist country in the world, was ready to go to any lengths for peace; but complete disarmament, when Russia was surrounded by enemies, would be madness! As for anti-religious propaganda, the Tsar's Régime had shown itself most intolerant of any beliefs other than the official religion of the State! The Soviet government had spared Tolstoy's work with the greatest tenderness and even fostered it out of reverence for him! It

ART AND COLLECTIVISM

would continue to show the same courtesy to all religious convictions! Conscientious objectors would not be forced into the army of Russia! As for the pupils in the Tolstoy School (so it was to be named), they numbered only a couple of hundred. When they stepped out into life, they would soon be caught up in the fresh wind that was blowing outside! O uncontrollable combativeness of Communist thought! No tactful silences in view of the time and the place! Rather a vigorous assertion of one's own opinion! And a deliberate effort to hammer a very doubtful, a very delicate, thesis, into the heads of visitors from abroad!

In dedicating the great statue of Tolstoy in the atrium of the school, Lunatcharski spoke again, and at first as an artist of an artist; but then he went on to say how there were both the peasant and the aristocrat in Tolstoy, and how the peasant had come finally to overtop the aristocrat. He paid tribute to the doctrine of love, which Tolstoy had preached: without it nothing good could be accomplished in this world (this, delivered in a solemn, emotional tone); but the conviction with which Tolstoy had pursued his goal (at this point, a more aggressive, more menacing tone) was something very different from the conviction of many people who called themselves Tolstoyans, but never lifted a finger to establish the kingdom of love among men! Tolstoy had fought for his ideas in the face of Tsaristic tyranny! He had preached destruction, wherever destruction seemed necessary! He had always been an enemy of reaction and of backward conservation! "His goal was our goal, though the road he chose was not our road!"

These words were somewhat stronger than the ones Lunatcharski had used in a speech some weeks earlier. There he had said that there was "agreement to a certain extent" between Communistic ideas and Tolstoyan ideas: "to this extent," he had added with a gesture: "From here to there!" The newspapers had all quoted the remark the following morning.

We inspected the house and the new hospital (a splendid building). Then we visited the Museum to look at the death-masks of Tolstoy, and his personal books, with his manuscript

SOVIET RUSSIA

notes in the margins (very sharp ones, in the Gorki volumes). The grave lies on a hillside. At the time when Tolstoy chose the spot, it looked out over a green valley. Now it is a gloomy place. The forest has grown up about it and cut off the view. A large crowd of peasants followed us thither, tramping along through the wet sticky mud, with which no shoe made in Europe seems able to deal.

I saw tears twice, during the course of this pilgrimage. Professor Velenski of Prague, wept while recalling memories of his boyhood, in the auditorium at the school—he had been a pupil of Tolstoy, and was a master of Tolstoian lore). Then, on the train journey back to Moscow, a woman burst into tears in speaking of the depth of Tolstoy's art, of passages which she loved, of things he had said to her during her visits with him. She had certainly missed something in that day of celebration! Had it in fact been anything more than a clash of opinions, somewhat softened to be sure, over the grave of the great poet? Had it not been a sort of assumption of Tolstoy into a great cause—posthumously, because the grand old man had died too soon to grasp the whole Truth? Did not the Love which he hoped would radiate from his memory when he had gone seem chilled by all those vigorous and deliberate tributes which the celebrations had provoked? Perhaps, had he lived, he might have thought of himself as the John the Baptist of the Communist Régime; but could such an intellectual appreciation be in any way a substitute for the consecration which the great and enduring work of his life demands and transforms into a deep experience? How much virtuosity, one must admit, in all those who had spoken at the celebration, and in those who had managed it! But also, what hardness, what violence! Without those tears the day would never have been Tolstoy's day, for me!

In his speech at the monument, Lunatcharski had already said that many working men had complained because so much money was being spent on the Tolstoy memorial. They were forgetting Tolstoy's greatness, he replied, and that the money was all going into schools and hospitals for the people! As a matter of fact, the Opposition had gone even further, some months before! On the very proposal of a Tolstoy jubilee,

ART AND COLLECTIVISM

voices were raised against the publication of the collected works, and especially against any public tributes to "that Christian," that "prophet of bourgeois error." Fortunately such opposition was overcome. Every country, every government, has the right to commemorate its great men in the manner it thinks most appropriate. But it would have been a great disappointment for many people throughout the world to discover that the Soviet State had found no word of remembrance for that glorious offspring of Russian soil! For many decades, Tolstoy was the strongest bond of union between the minds of Eastern and Western Europe. Perhaps interest in the revolutionary experiment of Soviet Russia is overshadowing him to-day in the thoughts of Europeans. But no one will ever desire to snap that strand in the bond of European unity which was woven by the act of veneration paid to him.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

EASTER IN SOVIET RUSSIA
(Leningrad, May, 1924.)

The notion of ignoring this year's Easter, which, according to the old-style Russian calendar, fell on the 27th and 28th of April, originated "at the top," among the leaders of the Party and the members of the government. From practical considerations, doubtless! The First of May is the great national holiday of the Soviet Republic; and the Second of May a day of rest like the days of rest that follow the principal Christian festivals. This would have made four holidays in one week, had Easter been recognised.

The bulk of the working classes in Saint Petersburg, even in that stronghold of Communism, the Putilov Works, did not take to the idea. The bourgeoisie, if one may still speak of such a class, and the peasants, naturally clung to their Easter—for century on century, it has been the great festival of the Russian year.

In the face of this opposition Moscow reversed itself: Easter, as much Easter as possible—from Saturday morning to Tuesday morning! However, it has always been the custom in the Russian Easter to feast on a special delicacy: curds of milk, mixed with raisins and sweetened with sugar. The Easter curds were always taken to the churches to be blessed. This custom was attacked. The supply of curds was held up at the stations on Saturday and not allowed to enter the city.

In exchange for the curds, Russia got—plenty of leisure! The newspapers appeared but twice during the whole week. Stores and offices were closed virtually all the time. In many factories the fires were banked, not till Thursday, but till the following Monday: nine days!

The workers, themselves, made one voluntary sacrifice. They are entitled by law to vacation leaves amounting to one

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

day in six—one sixth of their number, therefore, are always on vacation. In some shops they consented to transfer vacations to these unproductive days. A helpful sacrifice! On the whole, Soviet Russia loses more time, annually, in holidays than is the case in any other country. The revolutionary, anti-religious holidays parallel the Christian holidays. One of the "problems of transition!" The coming generation, so the leaders say, will have done away with the sentimentality, the superstitions, the habits, attached to the Christian festivals. This Easter, at any rate, was a strange confusion, a strange juxtaposition, of hostile forces and incompatible ideas. By five o'clock on Saturday afternoon the streets were almost deserted. The shops had closed at noon. The waiter in my hotel had announced the impending cessation of labour the evening before: no breakfast before ten o'clock; breakfast only until three; after that no further service! Not a restaurant was open. Not a street car was in sight. But for the continued functioning of the electric lights, one might have thought the general strike had become a reality at last! The theatres, of course, were open. For one thing, they needed the money, and they enjoy, as a matter of principle, the unmistakable benevolence of the State.

Whether the government will earn much in taxes from the Easter trade in the shops is doubtful. The flower stores are open, their displays blooming with a magnificence quite reminiscent of the old days. Orchids, lilacs, roses, suggest far greater general prosperity than the white asters I saw here in 1921. One gets a similar impression at the grocery stores. A Westerner could hardly believe it possible that such mountains of victuals could be seriously affected even by a holiday demand. But it is no less evident that relatively little buying is going on, surprisingly little, when one reflects that the Russian Easter, following on Lent, has been, by tradition, a period of sumptuous feasting. It may be that during these seven years there has been so much hunger that pious fasting has lost some of the merit it had in more prosperous times, when a very large part of the population was able, at least occasionally, to overeat. The general temperance visible on all hands is due principally to the depression in business, the progressive

SOVIET RUSSIA

failing of the New Economic Policy. Many people—and most, in the liberal professions—have lost money, and those who have not have good reason to behave as though they had. In days gone by the Russian temperament used to express itself, at this season, in a debauch of universal hospitality—endless feastings lavishly bestowed on all about. Now the old élan of life has been broken. One notes sobriety, self-restraint, on all sides—on some faces, actual anxiety. Russian expansiveness has been brought under the dominion of Russian prudence: there is far less kissing in the spirit of brotherhood; eyes look into other eyes more searchingly; there are more signs of cautious aloofness. An Englishman returning in 1795 to Paris, where he had not been since early in the Great Revolution, remarked that the cries of the street hawkers had changed from a major to a minor key. Much the same thing has taken place here. However lighthearted, however willing to forget, Russians, as a people, may be, they are still living under the shadow of the days of Alexander Bloch's "Fourteen." That the Communist wave is still rolling on is evident from the fact that a "Newest" Economic Policy is now following on the NEP. Arrests have been numerous again at this Eastertide—aristocrats, many students, a few merchants. No doubt there have been rooms where the warmth and heartiness of the Russian temperament and the Russian's uncontrollable love of dancing have insisted on expressing themselves in the gaieties of the old Easter Eve. And the churches have been crowded, at least the Orthodox churches, which in some cases had to erect altars on the streets—they were each lighted by hundreds of candles!—to accommodate the numberless believers who would have their Easter blessing at whatever cost. In the temples which the "Living Church" affiliated with the Revolution has seized, the attendances were smaller. The Cathedral of Isaac the Patriarch had plenty of empty seats. That church was once famous for its choir (I went to hear it during Holy Week). Its decadence was visible to the eye! The churches generally have been stripped of their ornaments, and assailed in their dogmas. Inwardness of faith, precision in observances and rites, the very dignity of the priest (he pays a "trade-tax" like anyone else), seem now to be matters of

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

individual conviction: they are no longer determined by the fiat of an all-powerful Church. Devout Christians see in all this the dawn of a new religious revival working from within outwards. They point with pride to the large numbers of men who are now attending divine services. It is true, that the Easter congregations contained people of all social classes and all ages, and that the old customs were so far as possible observed. On the streets, on my way to a party of the Komso-moltsi (Young Communist Guard), I met a number of little girls trudging along in their holiday gowns, carrying their Easter cakes to church for the traditional blessing!

EASTER IN THE FACTORY (Leningrad, May, 1924.)

In Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* there is a description which has caught for all time the tearfulness, the tenderness, the joy, that sweeps over the pious Russian multitude at twelve o'clock on Easter Eve, at the climax of the Mass—the moment of the Resurrection.

Nothing of the kind could take place to-day. I have learned to read the faces of church-goers!

But in the newspapers I noted that the "Young Communist Guard" was planning to give an atheistic Easter celebration of its own. Under proper escort I took a good hour's walk to a factory—one of the larger ones—whither, at my instance, I had been invited.

In 1923 I had witnessed the Carnival Procession of Blasphemers at Moscow (the same thing occurred in other cities). It was a line, a mile long, of Russian boys with a smattering of students from Asia. While the crowds of spectators that lined the sidewalks stood looking on in silent horror, those young men made every imaginable sport of religion and belief in God, pushing their provocation to incredible extremes. In those days the first number of *Besbozhnik* (The Godless) had just appeared. It was an official comic sheet with artistic caricatures. I doubt whether such a comic paper ever appeared in any country except Russia. Atheism in all its forms was at the time becoming a regular part of ultra-official "agitation" and "propaganda."

SOVIET RUSSIA

On this occasion I found a spirit of liveliness and gaiety pervading the factory. A workroom accommodating perhaps a thousand people had been filled with benches. At one end was a stage. The "Wolf-pack" was already on hand in front of the stage—"wolves" are children between seven and nine years of age, who are in the first preparatory stage to Party membership. Between ten and fourteen, "aspirants" are called "Pioneers"; from fifteen to twenty-three they are "Young Communists"—Komsomoltsi. Such the ladder up which a nucleus of specially trained Party members, future wielders of the power of the State, must climb. These young people, repositories of the Party's special hopes, were our hosts on this unprecedented and utterly unbelievable evening!

We had come too early. The programme was not to begin "till the bells began to ring"—till eleven o'clock, that is. But the "wolves" and the "Pioneers" would have their fun! They struck up the "Potato Song" at the top of their voices. The "Potato Song" avers that the man who has never eaten a potato has missed the joy of living, and that the potato is the ideal of the true "Pioneer." (Materialistic idealism, planted in them young, and corresponding to the philosophy of life prescribed by the State for the proletariat! Something devastating, I need hardly add, to anything that Westerners know as an "atmosphere of Eastertide")! The Komsomoltsi brass band, meantime, was tearing the roof off!

I had time to count the young people in the three categories—those between seven and twenty-three, that is: eighty, perhaps ninety, chosen from a force of about seven thousand employees! (That is the Party's tactic: selection, selection, selection!)

The room began gradually to fill: older workers, women, young people, all neatly dressed and well-behaved, some of them in holiday attire. Suddenly a crowd of about 1,200 people appeared from somewhere and packed itself into the hall.

The walls were covered with placards, on the whole tamer, I thought, than usual: "Muezzins, priests, rabbis—they are all alike." "The smoke of the factory is better than the smoke of incense." "Religion is necessary for the oppression of the People."

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

The seats in my neighbourhood happened to be filled with Komsomoltsi girls, and a sprinkling of labour students from the Zinoviev University—the university of the Party located in Leningrad. The Zinovievs and Kamenevs of the future, I guessed: clean cut, intelligent faces, for the most part; but among them also another, a very touching face, which might have belonged to a candidate for the priesthood in the West. Very “self-conscious” fellows, sure of themselves and of their power, ready on short notice to start a fight! They seemed to be of bourgeois antecedents. They were not the genuinely proletarian recruits, such as the workers’ schools, which are preparing workers and peasants for the university, are now turning out.

I am all ears for the conversation going on about me. A voice: “But the proletariat has to have a ceremony corresponding to the Christian Easter, and at the same hour as Mass! An atheistic ceremony, of course!”

Another voice: “Transition! Transition!”

I learn with astonishment that there is not only a Red Easter, but also a Red marriage and a Red baptism!

Again the second voice: “Transition! You can’t just abolish such things. You replace one ceremony with something better!”

When a birth or a marriage occurs, the fact is noted in a register that is kept at the factory. Babies are named by the “factory community.” The names are always “red,” “Marseillaise,” for instance, for a girl, or “Lassalle” for a boy. The parents of such babies, and the couples united at such marriages, are in their ideas most often half way between the old and the new. They have the “proletarian consciousness,” but “with hooks.” So the “transition” is made as easy as possible for them. Bridges are built for their feelings—cleverly, warily built bridges!

I ask a “Zinoviev student” whether he has been working here long. A factory-girl breaks in:

“They want to be workers! They are all anxious to be taken for workers!”

A most complicated situation, in a nutshell! Following out the programme of their education, the students are expected
Leningrad, May, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

not only to combine "brain work" with manual labour: it is their duty also to "agitate" and "propagand," giving a "self-conscious proletarian direction" to thinking in the factory. But this particular factory is older than the Soviet State. It has, I am told, a history of its own, its own ideas, its own outlook!

I give up! What is really going on in all those heads about me? Again I gaze at their faces! Placid, motionless, expressionless, all!

But the leader of the Komsomoltsi is on the stage. He is speaking. He has something to say about parents who are rearing their children in reverence for the Church and reproving them for mockery of religion. "But," he says, "parents who instil such nonsense in their young are, themselves, despite their age 'not yet dry behind their ears'" (Russian, for something like "still in their diapers"). Thence he proceeds to the subject of the evening: that other religions have Easter customs much like those of the Orthodox Church. Such superstitions he contrasts with the Communist's exaltation of labour, and he again pays his respects to the "old fellows" who celebrate Easter "by swilling and guzzling till they are sick in bed."

A straightforward speech, with no mincing of words! It is peppered with scathing allusions to the NEP and to the Old Régime, and ends with a call for cheers for the First of May, the real holiday of the proletariat!

There was an interlude of music. Then a heavy, thick-set individual with long flowing blonde hair appeared on the stage, looking, as I thought, like an itinerant preacher: "*A narodny!*" (a revolutionary yeoman of the '60's), remarked the young man whom I had taken for a theological student.

He delivered in very plain words a lecture on what might have been called comparative theology, telling about the different ceremonies devoted to the return of spring in various religions in various countries. He, too, diverted his speech in the direction of "agitation," but in fairly mild language.

Then, after more music, came the event of the evening:

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

an atheistic play, written by the "Art-section" of the Komsomoltsi according to the prescriptions of the "Collectivist Art Policy"! In the proletarian State there can be only collective authorship! It was proudly pointed out that the play had no author (I note, nevertheless, that "proletarian poets" do sign their contributions to current Russian magazines!)

The play was entitled: "A Miracle in the Komsomoltsi Club."

It opened with two "pioneers" on the stage. They have decided to set up a "Corner for the Godless" in the club in question. Club members appear. There is an argument on the point: what is the "corner" to be like, and where shall it be? The dispute waxes hot. Some Komsomoltsi girls come running in. They are in uniform, with red kerchiefs about their heads. They separate the disputants and, to the astonishment and amusement of the Club members, they discover statues of Isis, Mohammed and a negro god, standing on pedestals in the Club! Enter two Orthodox priests. They make a few remarks about the good old times, continually crossing themselves. They find fault with everybody, are roundly mimicked and finally chased away, amid jeers and scoffing. The stage is now empty save for the statues of the gods, which at this point start moving their arms and legs. Enter a young man, a NEP man, and a professor from the Academy of Sciences, who is as learned in matters of religion as the two-headed *narodny* and, bless us, those dear children themselves! Shortly the two popes return. The NEP man makes common cause with them, and they with the wriggling statues of the gods (these are now four, having been joined by Buddha—a very pretty girl). They are soon talking politics, arguing not indeed for the return of the Tsar, but for a democratic republic! The Komsomoltsi come rushing in again and send them all flying.

At this point came the only comic by-play that got a laugh from the older people: an old rubber shoe was waved after the fugitives in guise of a censor!

The dialogue ended with an ensemble on the refrain: "All the saints disapprove of the Komsomoltsi, but the Komsomoltsi are proud of it!" There then ensued a sort of "Communist Minuet"—Communitic, apparently, because the actors kept crossing themselves in mockery as they danced!

SOVIET RUSSIA

The play was followed by an atheistic poem, recited in unison by a group of the actors. The programme ended with a translation of a farce by Hans Sachs, the German poet of the Reformation days: "The Travelling Scholar." Naturally, the "scholar," who seduces a stupidly pious peasant woman, had been transformed into a Russian monk! The piece got thunderous applause.

All evening long public behaviour throughout the great room was all one could have desired. A missionary meeting could not have been more decorous! It was just an entertainment, arousing no more excitement than any other entertainment might have aroused. Not a few guests from other factories arrived late and made some noise in finding seats. On one occasion the thoroughly domineering chairman saw fit to interfere:

"Quiet! Quiet! Where do you think you are—in church?"

About three o'clock in the morning dancing began—the dancing of a healthy, good-natured people that enjoy such amusement. Only a fanatic of the American "shimmy" could possibly have had any fault to find with it! On my way out I observed a number of girls at the factory gate, vainly begging admission to the dance. "They are on their way home from church—and now they think they'll drop in on the Communists! . . . There are people like that!"

As I walked home with my escort, I was encouraged to discover the "dawn of a new culture" in what I had been seeing that evening. But, it occurred to me—might I not just as easily see in it a warped hothouse-grown offshoot of the antiquated culture of Europe? A culture cannot be manufactured on order—it cannot be created by mere fiat! What actually had impressed me was the determination, the strength of will, with which the manufactured product in question was being turned out—quite regardless of the value of the product, to my mind doubtful enough. But such merciless will, such relentless determination! Might they not be manifestations of a new and perhaps very un-European culture? And extremist determination, which attains one extreme only to seek another! A will which reigns as sovereign, in Leningrad and throughout all Russia, waxes wrathful against the innocent bells

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

in the church towers, makes those who can hear, hear exactly what it chooses and, furthermore, has a Komsomoltsi at its beck and call! A will upon whose manifestations Europe has been gazing with astonishment for seven years past, and still does not understand! Yes, there, just there, is where the problem lies! The will is what is new—not the things it does, in themselves! The first blasphemer in Russia was the first Bolshevik—Peter the Great! But his successors are going farther than he ever went. If you should ask the organizers of that atheistic entertainment what they could give in exchange for those joyous emotions of Easter or of Christmas, which they are banishing in disgrace from the face of the earth, they would cheerily answer: “Nothing!” Emotions are quite unnecessary things! They do harm rather than good! They are deceitful sops! They are weapons in the hands of the mighty! Things are to be judged in terms of their usefulness to the proletariat! The rest does not matter!

But what is useful to the proletariat can be willed, must be willed! Such the doctrine that is being taught to the youthful masses in Russia, and those who seem to grasp the doctrine most readily are selected for training as future leaders!

The attack on parental authority as well as on the slightest, even merely historical, respect for religion—all religions, will seem to Westerners a kind of violence that is being done to the child. As a matter of fact, there is some compensation: the young Russian is being meantime awakened in his keenest and most extreme instincts of individuality. He is stimulated in his hatred of everything bourgeois, and incited to greater violence in his war on all that is irrational, all that is based on piety, tradition, subordination, “prejudice.” From all this negation he derives a sense of self-assurance and personal responsibility (whereas Westerners would expect to find in him only a sense of being abused). It is an extreme cultivation of will, astonishingly hard, incredibly bleak! The more it destroys the stronger it feels itself! It is a positive menace to gentler, more harmonious, less fanatical civilizations.

Such gloomy reflections on my part cost me some of the pleasure I had otherwise felt at such a good-natured, ostensibly harmless entertainment, enlivened by the presence of children.

SOVIET RUSSIA

And I wondered: would that utter resolve, that inexorable negation of the rest of the world, which were being fostered in that little group of young Communists, eventually win out in Russia?

At the factory I had a talk with the twelve-year-old boy who had first appeared on the stage in the play with the idea of setting up a "Corner of the Godless." He was a modest, agreeable little chap, and he said to me, as naturally as could be: "I am the cleverest in my family." His father, it seemed, could neither read nor write. And then I thought of those little girls of the Russian bourgeoisie whom I had met hurrying to church for the blessing on their Easter cakes. Did the future of Russia belong to this intelligent "unprejudiced" young man, or to those little girls, and what they stood for?

An important question, it seemed to me, as important as the question of credits or of the export monopoly! Even more important, perhaps!

ON A RELIGIOUS FRONTIER: THE MANYTCH (Moscow, September, 1928.)

Across the Manytch, in the plains of the North Caucasus, live the Kalmucks, with their temple to Buddha. I would not seem discourteous—but if Asia it must be, I would rather be in Asia, in the Asia across the Manytch, beyond the glare of these electric lights in the Krupp Concession! At this season of the year the Manytch is dry. An automobile has no trouble with the cracks in the sun-baked mud of the river bed.

Russia has thrust her outposts in between the Kalmucks and this river of destiny. First I note some older villages, the oldest not more than sixty years old! They are going to starve this winter if the government does not help; for all this region has been cheated of its crop, first by a spring frost, and then by a hot summer's drought. Then very recent villages, sunk in a wretched poverty—tall, fair-haired men, who offer a most hospitable smile in the midst of this waterless land, now a sea of dust, and show their astonishment that a motor-car has come their way! They call to their children to observe the wonder. But these children have not been trained to wonders. Their gaze is listless, apathetic.

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

In the distance I descry what I take to be the outlines of an Orthodox church but, on coming nearer, I see that the steeples are of unusual shape—a suggestion of India, and a suggestion of China! All about, the flat reddish yellow and the deep red of Mongolian costumes—gorgeous things! Kalmucks! Away to the left from the temple, a swarm of low-studded houses, arranged on no particular plan! That is where the Kalmucks live! Small processions are moving towards the temple, figures that seem to have been invented, dropped as by some mystic chance into the formless void of this steppe where one is wont to see only figures in grey, with now and again a white blouse. Great yellow-skinned, full-moon faces with sharp noses, expressions that suggest quiet and strength! Such the people who rode out on their ponies, of yore, bending their bows in battle, and spreading terror through Europe!

The temple is built in the style of many Orthodox churches with a staircase leading up to a first story. I enter, with my friends. Disorder, dirt, breakage, everywhere! It is as though a whirlwind had swept over this holy sanctum—or the hand of some Destroyer!

We are attracting attention—and service! We are shown drums, and trombones—trombones a yard long! They must have wandered thousands of miles to get here! A sacrificial repast is spread before the god, a stale, not very impressive offering. Nevertheless, as the ritual requires, there are costly stalks of corn and flowers—wilted. Everything seems a little bewildered!

“We are arguing with the Communists back in the village as to whether there is a God. There are perhaps ten Communists there. We Kalmucks number five hundred thousand. The man up yonder does the talking and the arguing against us.”

They look at us, and hesitate, unwilling to continue. The glances they cast about are filled with suspicion and hate.

“The Soviet government is providing for us—and it lets us alone!”

We gather that the Supreme Priest of their creed lives in Astrakhan; and we ask:

“Are you in touch with the East, and the cloisters there?”

SOVIET RUSSIA

The question is pondered for some time. At length an answer comes :

"We send young people out there—to learn."

"Where do you send them?"

"To Thibet. To the schools of the Great Teacher. They stay ten years. Then they come home again."

Is not this, then, the beginning of Asia and its vast and silent unity?

We step outside again to the podium. Around the temple in circles, spaced at various distances, aged Kalmuck women are marching in procession, some of them holding children by the hand. They move rapidly in their long skirts and their high cylinder bonnets. They carry each a prayer spindle. As they pass the front of the portal of the holy shrine they prostrate themselves on the ground. Their faces wear expressions more mistrustful and more hostile than those of the men.

The high priest of the temple is "moving out"! He has just been ordered to vacate his house, to make room for a "Club." These "Clubs" are the strongholds of Communist agitation everywhere in Russia. Many Orthodox churches have been turned into clubs. In this case the temple of Buddha has not been confiscated—but just the cottage where the priest lived. Another, and smaller, building has been assigned to him instead. This is his last day for moving.

However, he is not going to the house they have given him. He is moving into the house his nomadic forefathers used, when, some sixty years ago, they were still roaming the steppes with their herds, and pitching their red tents at night where they pleased. Now the herd—not a very large one, is pasturing outside the village—and fine cattle they are to look upon! No foreign breeds are necessary to improve this stock! The canvas walls of the tent are being unrolled and set up. The old ladies are doing the work for this priest who will not accept a house from unbelievers hostile to his faith! They work busily—their yellowish faces warmed to a rosy glow by the effort. O, memories of the old days! They know how to bring the edges together and fasten the ends! They know! They know! And here the priest will be a free man! In a tent, as in the good old days, when a man had the whole steppe for a home!

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

Yes, Europe has overleapt the Manytch ! But this land does not belong to Europe ! First came the Civil Wars, and then came the Reds ! Europe is possessed of invisible powers, which the men of Europe carry around with them—those things you never can touch with your hand ! They call them “ ideas ” ! These Europeans think it is not enough that they should be their ideas. They must be the ideas of other people too ! Did Buddha ever preach to unwilling hearers ? But Asia knows that power must be resisted ! A mere glint in the eye is all that is allowed !

An evil wind is blowing out of Europe. Young Communist Kalmucks go to Moscow or Rostov to school. They stay not ten years, but one, or at the most two. They travel a few thousand miles—not many thousands, as they do when they go to the Dalai Lama ! Then they come back, despising everything, knowing everything, doing everything. The only law they know is the law they make themselves ! They are the only ones who are right ! Right ? They are growing wheat where, as everyone knows, only animals should be raised.

That is the way with these Westerners ! Many years back, when their uniforms were still something to look at, they brought diseases—terrible diseases ! Now only five hundred thousand Kalmucks are left, where there used to be millions. Some day when the priests come home from Thibet they will not find their people ! The temple will probably be a club, but with nobody in it ; and the steppe will be free again ; or perhaps in this very place the lambs will be born by electric light ! Yet some day, some day, the restless, supercilious high-and-mighties from Europe, who drive across the river in their swift wagons and look inquisitively about, will suffer violence in their turn because of their misdeeds ! And when that day comes, where will be the tent that belongs to them, their beloved soil, their far-away Lama, their symbols of the past—all such refuges of the heart ? Or have they lost all that, or thrown it away, just to despise everybody and everything not of their kind, give orders to everyone, now here, now there, as lords and masters of the world ? Why was the Manytch not made deeper and broader—as deep and as broad as the sea ?

SOVIET RUSSIA

MOSCOW AND ROME

(Berlin, February, 1930.)

Much water has gone under the bridge since Tchitcherin sat down at dinner on the cruiser *Dante* with the Archbishop of Milan and discussed the future of the Russian Orthodox Church with him. They even clinked champagne glasses on the subject, on that occasion!

That was during the Conference of Genoa. At almost the very hour of the banquet, a Roman Catholic relief mission was landing in the Crimea, where famine and pestilence were still raging. Its chief was an American priest, Father Walsh. Later on Father Walsh became the strongest pillar of the anti-Bolshevist tendency at the Vatican. However, the diplomatic attitude won the day there.

From the beginning of his reign Pope Pius XI attached great importance to a *rapprochement* with the Soviet government. Down to 1927 the possibility of establishing normal relations was seriously envisaged on both sides—on which side the more seriously one could not say. In 1925 the Soviets handed the Papal Nuncio in Berlin a detailed plan designed to regulate not only relations between the two sovereign powers, but Moscow's position in the relations between the Curia and Roman Catholics in Russia. One proviso made by the Soviets, among others, was that there should be no uncensored correspondence between the Roman pontiff and his Russian flock!

Despite this, and several other, astounding items in the Bolshevik proposal, the Vatican entered on negotiations. It soon developed, however, that Moscow was hedging on its initial offers in about the same measure as the Vatican made concessions—some of them extraordinarily far-reaching. After endless dickering the crisis came in 1927, when the Soviets suddenly declared that any concordat was out of the question, that the Soviet State had decided to regulate religious matters unilaterally by legislation of its own. That was the end of it! A query from the Vatican as to whether Moscow might still not have something to say remained unanswered. From that time on the "Genoa plank" was dented by no further footsteps; but only now has it been definitely discarded in the

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

aggressive and very fundamental encyclical of Pope Pius XI. A hope on the Pope's part that the road to a reunion of Rome with Russian Orthodox Catholics would be opened by the Soviet State must be taken as the explanation of his tolerant, very stubbornly patient attitude towards the Bolshevik Régime. This hope would seem now to be definitely abandoned, for so long as the Soviet State is in power, at least.

Pius XI now complains of incredibly blasphemous demonstrations organized by the Party against religion, and of numberless public insults to the Christian faith which foreign diplomats were "compelled" to witness. This is an exaggeration. There was nothing to prevent foreign diplomats from leaving the stands during the annual parades of May and November, when the floats full of such wickedness passed under their noses. But they have evidently assumed all along that such conduct on their part would be harmful to "good relations," and they have so far refrained from exercising an undoubted privilege. They have been "weighing the advantages," as the Curia itself has been doing!

Who can doubt this? For years past hundreds of Catholic priests have been in Soviet prisons, most of them certainly innocent of wrongdoing. Rather than better, things have grown worse of late. Never before have so many churches been closed or turned into moving-picture houses, or even, and preferably, into anti-religious museums! Never have Russian children been so vigorously incited against everything of a religious nature. Never before has such overt violence, such deliberate outrage, been used to inflame and sustain the Party spirit. Church bells may no longer be rung in Soviet Russia! They are being "scrapped" and melted down, on no other principle of right than the much-touted "good of the Party." The famous bell on the German Lutheran church at Tiflis was recently seized, and a vigorous protest from the German consulate brought the ready reply that the "confiscation had been affirmed." On inquiry as to what was to be done with the bell, it was explained that the metal in it would be used to complete "the monkey-cage in the 'zoo' at Tiflis"!

It is true that at the time of the Papal-Soviet negotiations such things were not being done so openly. Nevertheless, as *Berlin, February, 1930*

SOVIET RUSSIA

between yesterday and to-day, there can be noted only differences in degree in the attitude of the Soviets toward religious organizations. In the face of continual provocation during all these years, Rome has taken the standpoint that a *casus belli* would not exist so long as there was no direct *official* interference on the part of the Soviets with the *sacramental* functions of the Church!

In these circumstances it is difficult to agree with certain passages in the Pope's encyclical, wherein he reproaches the temporal Powers at present maintaining "normal" relations with Moscow for having "bargained" with "the foe of everything divine" (and, read between the lines, of "everything human") to obtain "worldly advantages." The Papal admonishment would seem to be more directly aimed at Germany. At Rapallo in 1922—under a Centrist chancellor—that country gave unusual conspicuousness to its resumption of relations with the Soviet Union. If the Curia be really minded to rouse the Christian world to awareness of the essence of the Bolshevik dictatorship, or even to action against it, one must regard the Pope's thrust at Germany as a not very fortunate beginning. The policies of the Curia and the policies of the temporal Powers in question have not been essentially different wherever fundamentals have been concerned.

THE END OF THE NEP (Berlin, February, 1930.)

Rome's aggressive advance against Moscow is being widely interpreted as an immediate consequence of the strengthening of the Papacy's world-position through its peace-pact with Mussolini. In my opinion, the Papal move has a deeper reason and a more universal significance.

Rome follows with great attention and closest study the vicissitudes of peoples all over the world. She has surely made no exception of the new situation that has arisen in the East of Europe. It is noteworthy, and not a little alarming, on the other hand, that Europe has paid such scant heed to the emphasis with which Stalin has just declared the New Economic Policy at an end. Was Genoa not the direct consequence of

THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

the proclamation of that policy by Lenin in 1921? And what excitement his pronouncement occasioned in Europe at that time! It was made the basis of the economic and diplomatic relations which the great Powers and the border States proceeded to re-establish with Russia, and the basis, in particular, of the policy of the Vatican! Down to the present moment, in fact, the Soviet government has been living, in its relations with the world about it, on the prestige won by Lenin's proclamation. But meantime Stalin has been bringing Lenin's work to a point which he now clearly defines as the end of the NEP! We now have to deal not with Lenin's Russia, but with Stalin's Russia! The fact is perfectly apparent, and for that matter, logical, in view of all that has gone before!

Two years ago the author of these pages was sharply reprimanded in Russia for having earnestly and with every sense of responsibility given warning that the New Economic Policy was being steered toward an honourable burial. What an unfriendly act, said Mr. Rothstein, the press censor, even to suggest such a thing! The change in the conditions out of which Genoa and Rapallo had developed should be allowed, in the opinion of the Soviet rulers, to complicate the situation abroad as little, and with as long a delay, as possible!

Now I am free to speak more plainly. The power of the Party "on the spot," the absolute freedom of every representative of the Party to do what he pleases in the name of the Revolution, is again being asserted. This has long been the case in the rural districts. It is again the case in the cities. On the Red Square in Moscow a technician's cap is burned at night with noisy demonstrations, to celebrate the downfall of the "caste of engineers"! Kubishev grandiloquently cries: "The man who is not for us is against us!" The prisons are being filled with bourgeois, who, in accord with the latest fashion, are no longer being forced to join the Party; in fact, are no longer allowed to join the Party. As was the case before the NEP, the Party is again locating its salvation in the violent communization of town and country. In dozens of villages "hostages" are being shot every day in reprisal for "acts against Party members and against the collective

SOVIET RUSSIA

interest," the actual authors of which the authorities are taking no pains to discover.

In the face of such facts, is anything left for the Kremlin to do except to state the principle which those very facts establish—that, namely, the NEP is at an end?

The non-Russian countries should take the Soviet State for what it is. It feels strong enough, at last, to deal with a bourgeois world, hungry for markets. Is not everything running its logical course? Is not Stalin absolutely right? Stalin says that he cannot hope for stability in the Soviet system, nor for an end of recurring depressions in Russian prosperity, until the Communist State is scrupulously and in all respects living up to the principle on which it was founded. That principle is the only thing that is stable, to-day, in the Soviet State. The State will not itself be stable till it is thoroughly socialized! Socialization, therefore, must be mercilessly pushed, with all the social, practical, economic and moral consequences which may happen to be involved! Otherwise all is lost! Why pound into the heads of foreign diplomats and foreign correspondents, so long as they do not notice it themselves, that Lenin was wrong, altogether wrong, when he proclaimed a NEP that would be in force "all along the line and for a long time"?

Was it a mere chance that the Vatican made its breach with Russia final at the very moment when Stalin was announcing the end of the NEP? Is such a coincidence plausible? I find it difficult to think so! The statesmanship of the Church of Rome has always envisaged broad correlations, and taken far-sighted, comprehensive views of things. Only in matters of minor importance has it ever stooped to petty routine. Rome is not infallible in her secular policies. Who could be? But one must at least grant that it is very interesting that the end of the NEP should tally so exactly in time with Rome's final withdrawal.

PART II

SOVIET ECONOMY: FROM NEP TO FIVE
YEAR PLAN

CHAPTER I

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

THE AGRICULTURAL CRISIS
(Moscow, February, 1928.)

The Soviet Union is in the grip of an agricultural crisis. It is, more than anything else, a "sales-crisis." The wheat is there; but the peasant is not bringing it in to market in sufficient quantities. That is the kernel of the great and infinitely complex problem which the government is studying with busy concern and of which every department of Soviet economy is feeling the effects.

The problem did not fall from the sky. It has been announcing its existence in the export statistics of the last three years. The fiscal year 1925-6 brought the first disappointment. Five million tons of wheat were to have been exported. But the national surplus proved to be only 2,600,000 tons. The following year, in spite of more energetic measures, and in spite of rapid progress in industrial development—stagnation! A figure of three million tons was reached—but Russia exported between ten and twelve million tons before the War! Now, for the current year, down to the end of January, only about 500,000 tons have been sent abroad, and the figure will not be very much increased before the next harvest.

At the same time, last year's favourable trade balance of 76 million roubles dropped for the first quarter of the fiscal year 1927-8 to four millions! For the first time since 1923, worries as to the size of the wheat export were complicated by acute concern as to the domestic supply. On January 1st, 1927, 7,501,000 tons of grain and grain products had been "laid aside," in other words transported to State warehouses for the eventual use of the cities and of the Army. This represented the savings of the six months preceding. The corresponding statistic for January 1st, 1928, showed only 5,706,000 tons—a deficit, consequently, of 1,795,000 tons.

Moscow, February, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

On December 10th, an exceedingly energetic attempt was made to "drive in" the wheat. In spite of that, the amount assembled for that month fell 661,000 tons below the yield of the preceding December. In January, deliveries steadily increased. The month showed an average excess of 309,000 tons. But the first five days of February show another slump. They have netted about 300,000 tons. The latest official reports place the additional requirements of the Army and the cities before the next harvest at $21\frac{1}{2}$ million tons. The visible supply is far from reaching that figure, and whether it will ever be reached is a matter of uncertainty. February will be the decisive month. If it proves disappointing, then extraordinary measures will be in order: requisition of reserves laid aside for special purposes (as, for example, the million tons stored away last year for the Army): and, in the last resort, importation.

In any event, the deficit in this year's grain supply is utterly astonishing. "Home-brewing" will not account for it—vodka has always been a favourite with the peasantry! And what became this year of the three million tons which the government was able to export last year—even subtracting the million reserve set apart for the Army? One may assume that this year's harvest was not as good as last year's; but this difference is by no means great enough to explain everything. Huge quantities of wheat must simply have been hidden away, or at least held back. This is not a crisis in supply! It is a crisis in selling!

One should remember that the symptoms have been increasingly apparent, and increasingly alarming, over a period of three years! The crisis in selling stands in close correlation with the slackening in agricultural production, indeed has grown out of it, so to speak, as its logical acceleration.

Figures are not attractive things, but those here in question have a certain dramatic quality. They have to be analysed. One thing they show at the outset; the effort to bring town and country together has not been successful! Indeed, in spite of all exertions town and country have definitely drawn apart—and the fact is simply coming to the surface! Beyond all question, the city, through a gigantic process of industrialization, has gained in powers of production and efficiency of

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

production. Meanwhile the country is not sure that it can make ends meet. It has not been paid adequate prices by the city. It has not been supplied with a sufficient amount of goods. The peasant is "ruffling his fur" against exchange with the cities!

The city, however, is dependent on farm products. The city is not getting them! The city therefore must find the missing grain: the peasant must be induced to sell! That is the demand of the present moment. It cannot be helped by theorizing.

The peasant must either be forced to sell, or else a wholly different policy from the policy hitherto followed will have to be adopted. But there is no intention of changing policies! Perhaps it would be impossible to change! So the force required must be administered in doses, proper doses; otherwise all the bonds that have been forged, and with such great effort, during these past years, will be endangered! No actual use of force! That has been said a hundred times, and will keep on being said! But, under whatever circumstances, the active power of the State and of the State's idea must be led to victory over the passive resistance of the peasants! A test of strength has become unavoidable, and this time all along the line! "We are strong enough to enforce our will through economic measures!"

These measures are being applied in their broadest possible scope. The approximation between city and country—the *Snitchka*—which Lenin stressed as of first importance—has hitherto been promoted largely in the form of veiled gratifications to the peasant. Everywhere, for example, pressure had been brought to bear to induce people to insure themselves in the State insurance companies; but the State was in the habit of allowing the peasants postponements in the payment of premiums. Now, suddenly, the premiums are being asked for! The same with loans, which the State has been advancing to the peasants for purchasing fertilizers, seed and the like. Contributions to the co-operatives have been raised from five to ten roubles. On January 7th new regulations were issued to govern local taxation for local improvements, which the village communities have been managing themselves. Hence—
Moscow, February, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

forward only peasants who have a right to vote—in other words, only “poor” peasants—can take part in the village assemblies which meet for these purposes. And they naturally assess the burden of the expenditures upon the peasants who are able to pay—the *kulak*, the “rich” peasants; an easy and altogether legal means of expropriating them! One is reminded of the “Poor Peasants’ Committees” of 1919-20! At least 35 per cent. of the local income must be devoted to these purposes. One may imagine how high the local tax on a man must sometimes be. This provision will certainly be followed by a “progressive” tax.

All these measures are, in fact, well calculated to induce the peasant of means to bring his grain to market, and henceforth to take more interest in the acquisition of *tebervonetz*, which, of course, he has never regarded with any great enthusiasm! Love, however, they will not engender! To be sure, certain more friendly measures have also been taken. All available manufactures have been shipped from the cities to the country. Work in the factories has been transformed entirely to meet the demands of the peasant market: so much so, that the women in Moscow are complaining that they cannot find the dry goods they are accustomed to, but only “peasant” substitutes! Everything is being cut to fit the rural districts!

However, no one must imagine that the actual needs can be met, or even approximately met! If that could be done, even these present difficulties would be unthinkable! The best that one can do is to show one’s good will!

“NOW SUGAR, NOW THE WHIP.”

The idea is: “Now sugar, now the whip.” That has to be the policy! The procedure is administrative, especially against the administration itself! Soviet presidents, co-operative superintendents, official wheat buyers, are given no peace, and one hears of mass dismissals as a punishment for negligence, brutal overzealousness, irregularities of all kinds. For the purpose of avoiding corruption it had been the practice, hitherto, that a State buyer should not go out after customers, but wait for offers. Now the customer, the peasant, is being vigorously run to earth! As one may take for granted in the

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

oviet Union, a thorough-going campaign of enlightenment as to the necessity of delivering the grain is also in progress; but along with it go "surveys of supplies"; and a surveyor, confronted with distrusting, or even furious, peasants, eventually will say, to justify his presence in a village, that he is looking for a wife and not for hidden grain!

In fact, can there be aught but friction, when, to make inspections by the buyers easier, orders are issued forbidding transfers between one village and another, though these be situated side by side? Grist mills are under supervision lest the peasant grind more flour than he actually requires for home use. The co-operatives are enjoined not to sell goods to peasants who are suspected of secret holdings of wheat.

As is always the case, the procedure is carried to its logical extremes. The large grain organizations of the State have been combined into one, to avoid mutual competitions in a given field. But there is, nevertheless, a very serious competition. It comes from the private dealer who offers as much as five times the price fixed by State law, a price about on a level with pre-War quotations. The wheat dealer, if we are to believe his prosecutors, not only raises prices: he conceals grain for purposes of speculation. His very shrewd activities are in all respects prejudicial to the State's prestige! He is an actual danger! He finds wheat where the government can get nothing! He is in league with the small manufacturer, who is also being prosecuted for making the private dealer's competition possible by supplying him with goods which the peasant needs. It seems probable that the numerous closures of small factories that have recently taken place, especially closures of shoe-shops, have their origin in such traffic. The peasant who has grain to sell should be given no choice in respect to the State's offer! Only so can the State be master of the situation: such the hard truth, as compared with the NEP! In this same regard, orders have recently been published which forbid outright any private trading between town and country; and other orders requiring registration of dealers in grain—a measure which automatically reduces their number! We are at present witnessing an anti-NEP wave hardly less violent than that of 1924!

SOVIET RUSSIA

All in all, and in spite of the careful "dosing," this campaign is featured more particularly by measures of force than by measures of persuasion. The grain *must* come out, ton for ton! And certainly, many things besides grain! Too bad—but there is no help for it! Since 1921, the Soviet State has been engaged in a gigantic loan business with the rural population, or rather with the whole population, of Russia. In exchange for an advance in terms of present discomfort it will some day pay back, in terms of natural economic self-sufficiency for Soviet Russia. To win this independence there had to be an elementary industrialization of the country from the ground up, an industrialization prosecuted with all possible speed, and at any price! The German loan of 300 millions was spent mostly for factory and tool-making machinery. Nothing was bought for the peasant's personal consumption. It has been a "vertical" development from production upwards, which cannot reach the surface of daily life, cannot provide the individual (160 millions of individuals) with what he needs, for a long time still to come. In spite of magnificent achievements in industry, there is still a famine of articles of prime necessity, of the goods necessary for exchange with farm products. The shortage of food in the cities to-day is the counterpart of the shortage of manufactures in the "flat lands."

Now the idealists at the Kremlin do not particularly care if "one or two generations have to be skipped," provided the independent Communist State is created in the process. The peasant has simply got to wait till industry "gets along that far." Of course, a different policy might have been followed, in the present very real distress! The heavy expenditures for industry might have been allowed to lapse! The proceeds of export might have gone into articles of peasant consumption. In that way agriculture might have been made more prosperous, and then, later on, when a certain prosperity had become a fact, when exports had attained a certain bulk, the expansion in industry might have been resumed! At the same time, of course, it would have been necessary to give the "rich peasant" and the Nepman greater freedom of action, as was actually contemplated in 1921!

The system that is at present being used to get out the grain

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

shows that no one in Moscow has ever thought seriously of adopting such a policy! It was deliberately rejected at a time when there still seemed to be some choice regarding it, namely, in the years 1924 and 1925!

The point is—the Revolution was not made to adopt policies of just that kind! The period between 1921 and 1924 showed that any friendliness towards the NEP sets forces in motion which, intentionally or unintentionally, are destined ever to be hostile to the Soviet system. What is now taking place on Russian soil definitely refutes the notion that Stalin, when once freed from the pressure of the Opposition, would turn to the Right. At this critical moment, on the contrary, he is allowing the peasant, who chooses not to understand, or is unable to understand the excellent intentions of the “ruling city,” to see just how determined the Communist Régime can be!

It is said that this move to a farther Left, which re-opens many wounds that seemed to be closing, and discredits the wisdom of many foreign prophets and ambulant society lecturers, is only a preparation for a counter-move to the Right. This notion overlooks the fact that the government has embarked on a course along which it could not easily retrace its steps, even though another demonstration has been given of what a supple administrative instrument the Soviet machine can be. Even if the Communist Party in Russia wished to go to the Right, along the bourgeois road, it could not do so in the one way it would care to do so. For it would encounter in peasant and Nepman, and especially in the rural Nepman, a mistrust which the years have made second nature to him, and which the present measures have only embittered. That individual initiative on which any policy of the Right would have to be based could be revived but gradually. Everything seems to indicate that the Soviet Régime must work along with its usual “graduated pressure,” that after it has said A it must also say B!

It is noteworthy that the peasant has not only held back his grain. Such important activities as corn-oil grinding and starch manufacturing have been left without raw materials. Many of the time-honoured high grade cultures, such as that of flax, show serious under-production. The peasants everywhere have

Moscow, February, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

either not raised enough or not delivered enough. It was in October that they suddenly ceased selling. That, be it observed, was after the war alarm had subsided, but when the disappointment as to higher prices and shortage of goods had become a fact. The campaign which is now being made to repair the shortage increases, at the same time, the friction out of which the shortage arose. The Kremlin, of course, is perfectly aware of that. Nevertheless, there was no turning of the rudder. The course was held—straight on to the Left! In this we not only see that same logical perseverance to which we have grown accustomed in the government of this State. We also cannot fail to notice a certain element of necessity in it. The desire for years has been, as it still is, to strike a harmony in the relations between town and country. That was Lenin's deepest concern in the last prophetic years of his life. And much has been done in that direction. Yet, nevertheless, from the very nature of the Communist system, conflict between town and country arose with the most inexorable logic.

The crisis has now developed to a certain acuteness. Can the tug-of-war between iron nerve and iron muscle on the one side, and stolid inertia on the other, be long protracted without danger to the whole system? Is this test of strength to develop into a decisive struggle for power?

In view of the experiences of the past winter, the government is proceeding with the utmost logic. Of the 24 million farms in Russia, about six million are "surplus-farms," farms that have plenty of land, either owned or hired, and farm machinery of a certain importance, (though the standards, in this respect, must not be imagined as equalling, or even approaching, those of other countries). These six million surplus-farms, primarily, have been the basis of the export trade, and of the grain supply for the cities and the Army.

There would seem to be only one way of escape from the State's dependence on these wealthy farms: so to organize the "poor" and the "middling" peasants as to make them an adequate support for the national economy, quite apart from the whims and caprices of the *kulaks* who own the six million surplus-farms in question. Socialization, in other words! There is no other alternative!

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

The plans are now before us, though not perhaps in their perfected forms. We may, nevertheless, sketch them in rough outline.

Here, too, there is "dosing," "staggering." There is to be the "collective farm," the *colchos*, in which the peasants pool their land and their heavy equipment, the whole constituting a sort of corporation. The State is to supply them with tractors, money, and loans in kind, a task at which the agricultural banks, the co-operatives and the village Soviets are to join forces.

Then comes a more radical form of organization: the "commune," the "communal farm," a farm worked in common, on a strictly communistic basis—the *comchos*. The land is pooled, is "capitalized": that is to say, a nominal sum is paid to the former owner in instalments; after a specified time the land becomes the property of the "commune." The "commune" supports all the families that work on it. Whereas the *colchos* maintains private property, and aims merely at pooling expenses and profits in the interests of large scale farming, the *comchos* is non-individualistic throughout. Its book-keeping and financing are subject to the supervision of the local branches of the State Bank.

"Communism in the village"! Lenin's fondest dream which he thought of as perhaps the far distant coronation of his work! Now here it turns up as an immediate necessity of practical politics!

The Revolution broke up the great estates, which embraced three-fifths of the land in Russia. At that time farms that were worked by peasants in common (the *Mir*) were not touched; but the land that was made available was divided so many acres per head, and the peasants were settled on it more or less as they chose.

As is now well known, this operation did not satisfy the "land-hunger" that prevailed in the country; and it resulted in a slump in agricultural production through the break-up of the great estates and the falling-off incident to the change from large-scale to small-scale farming (very much the same thing was happening in Roumania and other countries).

Now the move toward socialization is a return to large-scale

SOVIET RUSSIA

farming, made possible by the formation of the *colchos* and the *comchos*, and to be perfected later on when such farms are further united one with another in the "combines" (the *custs*). Some day they will be strong enough to swallow all the private farms! Everything, of course, is being done to win the "poor" and the "middling" peasants over to this plan. Hitherto, the system has been to re-distribute acreage every nine years, a method resulting in gross injustices. In the *comchos* the profits are distributed on a *per capita* basis; and the system further makes available to the small and smallest holdings, to a much greater extent than ever before, the use of the most modern farm machinery.

The *colchos* has long existed in different regions in Russia: and so has the *comchos*, though the latter has resulted usually from settlements on hitherto unoccupied lands. But the new plan, which we have just sketched, cuts deep into the familiar relations of land ownership and labour in the rural districts of Russia. It represents a retreat from the system of *per capita* land division applied after the Revolution. It affords a reconciliation of Communist ideals with the demands of modern agriculture, which tends toward large-scale farming. It puts a new foundation under the tradition of the *Mir*, and transfuses the concept of the *Mir* with a number of courageous and ingenious innovations.

But it also suggests many doubtful queries! The whole enterprise requires very large financial outlays. Is the money available? The "rural budget" of 717 millions has been raised by scarcely fifty millions for this year. And does not the communized peasant become in real fact just a farm labourer? Can one expect to find in him the unselfish initiative, the joyous, work-loving, community spirit, which might prove to be the most important of the pre-requisites for success?

So far as possible, no more land will be rented to the *kulak*, and he will be deprived of help from the "poor" peasantry. Tractors, credits, and so forth, are to be "concentrated on the Plan." But is that not the story of the sparrow and the dove? Rural Russia has from time immemorial been a vast, slow-moving, notoriously mistrustful country. Now it is to experience the regulation, the system of preferences, the

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

sabotaging of all economic individualism, which have been visible in Russian industry and Russian commerce during these past years. The agricultural programme, in its essence (we are, of course, only at the very beginning of the effort to carry it out), is nothing more or less than the "war on the NEP" expanded to its fullest dimensions. And what will become of the previous forms of farm work, which have hitherto provided for the country's needs? Can they be replaced by these new devices?

The romantic era of the *Shoitchka* has passed. Hitherto the controlling idea seems to have been to coax the peasant, the *kulak* included, over to the Socialistic point of view, by kind treatment, by satisfying his needs, by cultural propaganda. The programme for the "rationalization of agriculture," which was developed at the last Party Congress, strikes, to judge by its recent applications, a definitely war-like note. Moscow is no longer going to wait for the peasant to become friendly to the State in gratitude for favours received. Moscow is going to take hold of the peasant with imperious sternness, model him, force him, into a definite form—and wherever he "refuses to give," it will oppress and suppress him, so far as possible.

How far Moscow will get with this programme remains to be seen. The task is an enormous one. To the ordinary individualist it would seem superhuman. The plan can be explained only as a necessity of State. It has been conceived in fear of elements of increasing strength which have just given a disquieting manifestation of their power, and have by no means been shaken from their inborn, instinctive stubbornness. It involves the risk of turning against the government that portion of the rural population which is agriculturally the most important. How much statesmanship it will require! And surely, even Moscow would have preferred to postpone the issue for another ten years, when industry would have attained a much greater efficiency!

The new agricultural policy has not been launched without bitter dissension within the Party, and even within the very ranks of the all-powerful. The debates are still continuing at this moment, and they will not be hushed for a long time. But the Party which is determined to force happiness upon this country, must have absolute submission to its power. It

SOVIET RUSSIA

can survive in no other way. It can endure no compromises, not even those, in the long run, which it would have been glad to make of its own accord. The present agricultural crisis shows that! The longer the Party lives, the more inexorably this fatality asserts itself. Trotski's Opposition predicted that these very consequences would have to be drawn as regards rural Russia. It betrayed the compulsion under which the Party is acting to-day. It was for doing so that Trotski's Opposition was punished!

GRAIN BALANCE, 1928
(Moscow, May 29th, 1928.)

On the occasion of the first congress of those "Collective Agricultural Organizations" which are fighting the *kulaks* and conducting the campaign for rural socialization, the People's Commissar for Agriculture, Kubyak, who replaced the more conservative Smirnov in February, made a speech on the general situation in his department.

He found the visible grain supply insufficient. He further stated that the government had not succeeded in laying aside, from the 21.3 million tons brought to market, the quantity it had planned: 12.13 million tons. Other sources of information put the available reserve at 10.3 million tons. To follow these, the deficit under expectations would be about 1,800,000 tons. Kubyak expressed a fear that, in view of declining deliveries in grain, the 820,000 tons necessary for June, July and August might not materialise; in which case provision for the industrial cities would be very difficult.

He then went on to lament the very low productivity of Russian agriculture, which was showing figures roundly equivalent to those of primitive Africa. Above all else he urged the local officials of the *colchoses* to strive for a better quality of grain. As for the tempo of rural socialization through collective or communistic forms of agriculture, Kubyak announced that by the fiscal year 1931-2, putting the total of marketed grain at something higher than 21.3 million tons, the *colchoses* should produce not less than 16 or 17 million tons. That would pre-suppose a complete and revolutionary transformation of conditions in the rural districts of Russia.

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

The declaration shows in any event just how earnestly the Soviet government is bent on pushing a policy of active socialization in the greatest peasant country in the world ! The outcome of the experiment, which requires the greatest economic and administrative exertions, should be virtually decisive of the future of the Soviet State.

For the time being, Kubyak complains that of the 600,000 tons of wheat which were marketed for seed by the "collectives" already functioning, a scant half came into the possession of the State. There undoubtedly exists inside the "collective" movement a tendency, born of purely economic interest, to fit in not merely with the market provided by the State, but with the market offered by that private capital which the "collectives" were created to destroy ! Kubyak, indeed, found it advisable to threaten those "collectives" which sell to private dealers with the withdrawal of any further assistance from the State. He also mentioned that a number of "collectives" now in operation object to interference from the State Commissariat of Agriculture ; to which he replied that the State is entitled to such intervention "in view of the great sacrifice it is making to keep the 'collectives' going." The 58 millions he has spent on them gives him, he thinks, a right to have his say ! He expressed himself as opposed to the further organization of "collectives" by administrative order. He then quoted some most surprising figures. In the government of Saratov, he said, about 23 per cent. of the cultivated area was being worked by collective enterprises ; and similar percentages were reported by Ryazan and other "governments." In some cases, of course, the change in system amounted to expropriation, since the class-war was being waged with great energy in the rural districts.

We must wait to see how far, during the process of transformation in systems, it will prove possible to market enough grain for ordinary purposes. This difficulty seems to be virtually chronic. Without quoting statistics, Kubyak described the present market deliveries of agricultural produce as "sad," in comparison with pre-War figures. The newspapers assert that since the slackening of official pressure for getting the grain to market, the speculators have been trying

Moscow, May 29th, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

to disturb things by spreading all sorts of rumours. They also report a poor crop of winter wheat, bad prospects for the next harvest, and other dispiriting items. In some places there have been bread riots and similar disturbances, notably in the Ukraine, in the Don region, and here and there along the Volga.

RETROSPECT

(Moscow, August 28th, 1928.)

The lives of all peasants in the Soviet Union, the existence of 27 millions of private farms, to-day find themselves hurled as with one violent thrust into a vortex of great and rapid transformation—and therewith the fate of all Russian agriculture over a cultivated area of 100 or 105 million *desyatins*. Europe seems to be indifferent to what is going on. At least her attention is drawn only to this or that spectacular point in the colossal complex; the fact that for two years past Russia has exported no wheat; the recurrence, in peace times, of bread rationing (a bread, that is not always bread)! Waiting lines in front of the shops everywhere in the Soviet Union; high prices—butter at six shillings a pound on August 23rd! Might one not say, in comment on all such things, that they are “like the winter of 1917” in Germany?

To reason in this way would, I fear, be “sleeping off” an important political happening for the sake of comfort, for love of habitual trains of thought; and it would, I also fear, be taking the chance of a rude awakening!

Shortage of food undoubtedly exists in Russia—but under what circumstances? One notes that that very portion of the peasantry which would be in a position to supply the cities with the surplus resulting from its work, is being economically annihilated by Party and government with every conceivable device, and in spite of the disastrous effects such costly severity is having upon prices and sources of supply for the cities. That such a state of tension has arisen must be put down to a deliberate intention on the part of the leaders, as something which they have knowingly risked. One also notes an extraordinarily comprehensive activity, also emanating from the Party and the government, for the establishment of gigantic

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

grain farms. And one thing more : organizations for collective farming existed before 1927 and 1928 ; but now these socialistic forms of agriculture are being developed with tremendous energy, and they are embracing hundreds of thousands of new peasants each month. Two or three of those extra shillings that are being paid for a pound of butter must, in view of all this, be accounted as part of the costs which the "moving tag and baggage" from private ownership to agricultural socialism necessarily involves. These costs, for the time being and for a long time to come, are certain to be increased, whether through the decline in production which the war on the *kulak* will entail ; or through expenditure for socialization ; or through the displacements and disturbances in the political and social field which will prove unavoidable. And just as the costs will increase, so will the risks. But it is none the less certain also that the effort to socialize the country will be carried to a decision by the Party that is now dictating in Russia. It will be carried out, because it could not be halted, especially at this stage, without endangering the whole structure of socialism in the Soviet Union—and let the price of butter go up to twenty roubles, if it will !

KARL MARX IN THE SOVIET VILLAGE
(Moscow, August 28th, 1929.)

It was in the year 1927, if I am not mistaken, that the word first went out—with characteristic Bolshevik hardness, but also with a saving transparency—that "We must become independent of the peasants !" Russia had thousands of square miles of virgin soil. The technique of agriculture (with reapers and tractors) had made enormous progress in modern times. If, on such soil, and with such means, the State could create gigantic grain farms on the American and Canadian model, it might hope after a few years, and with a relatively slight expenditure of man-power, to provide the ten or eleven million tons of wheat necessary for Army and city, without depending on peasant production.

But on the question "How can we get along without the peasants ?" there followed very directly another : "What are we going to do with the peasants ?"—a mere matter of

Moscow, August 28th, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

130 of the 160 millions of Soviet citizens ! Under the circumstances it would have been logical to direct active policy as a whole upon that portion of agriculture which was to be created for supplying the towns now in process of rapid socialization, of rapid industrialization. Just as there were already giant grain farms, could one not go on and create giant farms for meat, dairy products, vegetables, fruit, and so be free completely of the compact masses of the "gray" peasantry ? Now, much is actually being attempted in this direction ; but what a gulf would be opened in the population of the country if the peasant were thus shoved to one side !

Nevertheless, the possibility of this theoretical solution must be borne in mind if one would understand the present situation.

The trouble was that it was a solution in too negative a sense. Where was a rapidly developing industry to sell its product if the peasants were left "in the swamp ?" And in any event should one simply ignore the enormous power that resides in such huge numbers of people ? There was also another question : would not such "independence" open a wide field for exploitation by private enterprise, and not only in the economic sense, but for social and political purposes ?

A clean-cut alternative thus presented itself. On the one hand, one might allow private enterprise to take the lead in the "non-socialized sector" and gain control of production. (That, more or less, was the situation of the surplus-producing peasantry down to the autumn of 1927, when the crisis which then developed revealed the dangers inherent in such a policy) ! Or else, one could crush the *kulaks* ! But, in that case, one would be destroying the existing agricultural order ; and then would arise the question of what could be put in its place. For one could not for a moment cherish the illusion that a Socialist island, fully provided for, and with a magnificent industry in its midst, could be raised in a sea of tens of millions of peasants, and at the same time keep that world of peasants, by artificial means, below the level of the *kulaks*, nay, below the level of the peasant who could bring even a little to market. Yet just that had to be done, if a hostile power deriving from the rural districts were not to be created within the State (as in fact happened, at least in the judgment of the leaders of the

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

Bolshevik Party, politically so very thin-skinned, during the years between 1921 and 1926-7).

So then, only one course was possible : a positive solution : to bring city and country under one common denominator : the Socialist system !

It is the attempt to do this that is now bringing colour—red, a shrill red—into that rural Russia which was to remain “gray” for decades till everything was ripe ! The effort is now barely eighteen months old. I am sure I shall be accused of exaggerating—but after a great deal of travelling, involving many interviews and the gathering of many impressions in all sorts of places, and after examining no end of sources of all kinds, I am ready to state that the resistance of privately managed peasant agriculture within the Soviet Union has been broken. The *kulak* is now just an archaism in Russian propaganda-jargon, just a mournful scarecrow erected on the old *kulak's* grave !

Last year it was a fight for economic survival waged against the *kulak* with arbitrary taxes and embargos on commodities and credits. This year it is class-war in earnest, with more taxes on grain, and persecutions conducted by farm hands and “poor” peasants, and the lower half of the “middlings.” It is a social overturn in rural Russia to the disadvantage of property. To-day, furthermore, danger threatens not merely the *kulak*, who once upon a time “systematically” employed farm labour or “systematically” rented farming supplies and farm tools. My observation shows that the higher limits of legal property as formerly drawn are rapidly sinking. Any Russian peasant with two horses or three cows must tremble in his boots before the power and the greed of the “poor” peasants who live in his village. I do not know whether this development may not be taking place too fast to suit even those who originated it. But it is a question of a revolution—bloodless, as seems to be possible in a revolutionary country, but none the less real. It is therefore, a question of raw elementary forces. The vital cells of the old order of private ownership have been crushed to a pulp ; and the pulp is now ready for pouring into the new moulds of agrarian Socialism.

From our Western, our bourgeois, point of view, all this

SOVIET RUSSIA

would seem ghastly in human terms, and irrational in economic terms. I was not a little astounded last year on returning to a once prosperous village which I had visited two years before. At the latter time a co-operative in the village had a cash capital of 60,000 roubles, and had built a school. Now it had been reduced by taxes to a debt of 10,000 roubles. Of course, the defenders of rapid socialization can point to the extraordinary spread of "dwarf" farms—tiny settlements from the villages on confiscated landed estates, or on land formerly without owners. In view of the rapid increase in population, too little of such land is available. One can say that under present conditions the individual farmer is very rarely identical with the independent farmer: most often he falls into slavery to his richer neighbour who owns all the means of production; and the past years have shown that under such conditions no prosperity for agriculture could be expected, even if industry, the city, were not riding forward to its glorious future on the peasant's back. One thing, also is certain: that the astonishingly rapid success of "dekulakization," the surprisingly complaisant rush of the peasant into the "combinates," which somehow seem to satisfy his over-wrought thinking, would not be conceivable if the peasant had any reserves which he might set up against such a ruthless attack upon his property. No, he is actually consenting to pool his oxen in the common fund; because the other fellow has many things which he has not; and he sees how much the State is doing, or promising to do, for the man who tips his cap to Karl Marx and communizes his land, his tools, his selling, and his buying, according to State prescription.

I confess that it is difficult to-day to measure just how far intention, and just how the compulsion of events, have given the originators of this great transformation the conviction and the courage that must have been necessary for even venturing it!

In this article I have been dealing simply with the general considerations which underlie the situation. Of course, there would be much still to say of the practical workings in which all the above is expressed, and of the effects they are having on the peasant, especially as a human being. Much, surprisingly much, has been accomplished—accomplished, of course,

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

"from above down." And much of it has been a most difficult, and therefore a most admirable, achievement!

I leave this thought with our out-and-out propagandists, who think they might be hurting their cause if they admitted the complexity of the problems which the Soviet Régime has surmounted in achieving all this.

CO-OPERATIVE *versus* COLLECTIVIST AGRICULTURE (Moscow, September, 1929.)

Pure Socialism is thus eventually to reign over peasant life in the Soviet Union. So wills the Party, so wills the government. It is to come about over several routes, routes closely co-ordinated one with another, as in a great net for a great catch—the peasant. Soviet jargon has a term to the point: it speaks of a "leverage system." A most interesting thing this "leverage system," a system capable of indefinite development!

That particular organization of agricultural activity known as the *colchos* has attracted more particular attention in the West. Keeping to the scheme as scheme, one may distinguish three different types of *colchos*: first of all, a *colchos* with a minimum of socialization, a mere pooling of land, heavy machinery, and, sometimes, of draught animals. Then comes a second degree, so to speak: a pooling of all draught animals, part of the cows and buildings, and all farming tools without exception. Finally comes a highest stage, where all ownership is in common, and living is in common, though not necessarily to the exclusion of all private property. Such *colchoses* are called *comchoses*—"communes." They are capable of still further grading in the matter of socialization, till it becomes, for instance, a question as to whether a dog may be considered private property. The middle degrees are the more common at this moment, and bid fair to remain so for a long time to come; though a recent Party resolution specifically states that the lower forms are to be considered only as transitions to the highest—to pure Socialism, to Communism.

This theoretical outline is being filled in with substance at breathless speed. The statistics are steadily climbing; but by the end of next year, according to present plans and computations, 3.5 millions of households, embracing 13 millions

Moscow, September, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

of souls and 26 millions of acres will have been collectivized (as against 5 millions of souls at the present moment). But supposing the 1930 figure were 15 millions, as is quite possible. That would still be hardly more than ten per cent. of the total peasant population of Russia (140 millions)! Even if the present policy of socialization were fully to succeed there would remain, as doubtless for a long time there will remain, a truly colossal remnant still to be dealt with, still to be guided toward the great goal! Now, the Soviet State began very early to do something in this connection: and what it is now doing is so extraordinary that the *colchos* movement is almost nothing as compared with it.

Lenin specifically recommended the co-operative, the partnership, as the initial step toward agrarian socialization. The Socialist *colchos* of the present moment is in fact a forged and tempered point affixed to the end of the long shaft of the co-operative system.

During the first years (down to 1927, that is) the forms of co-operation in the Soviet Union did not vary greatly from those to be found elsewhere in Europe. But such forms of partnership, from the very beginning, enjoyed important favours from the State. The State was specially interested in them, financially, and they played an impressive rôle in the fight on private trade. This extraordinary growth can be explained only through the rapid disintegration of the opposing elements, which were being drastically belaboured with economic as well as administrative measures. The different organizations were united at first in the *Selskossyuzs* ("agrarian co-operatives") so-called. The *Selskossyuzs* worked primarily through the rural credit co-operatives which were subordinated to it. But very shortly the special co-operatives united with the *Selskossyuzs* developed into a full independence of their own. As early as 1928, says Ratner in a book valuable, among other things, for its lucid statistical studies ("Agricultural Co-operatives in the Soviet Union," Moscow-Berlin, 1928), the Co-operative of Milk Producers (the *Masslozent*) had already gained control of the far larger part of the milk coming to the Russian markets; and the same thing had happened in flax, hemp, eggs, and several other agricultural products. With this

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

development, the credit co-operatives withdrew more and more to strictly financial activities. The *Selskossyus* was dissolved, and a new organization of general character, the "Central Union of Co-operatives," took its place.

THE "LEVERAGE" FOR AGRARIAN SOCIALISM

Now so far, all this presents nothing particularly novel from the standpoint of Western co-operativism. But the fact is that these Russian co-operatives were all set up, so to speak, on tracks that led toward Socialism. They were, as they still are, introductions to the lower grades of the *colchos*—of "collectivization," as the phrase goes.

The point deserves an illustration; and we might take the example of the egg co-operative which now virtually handles all the eggs that are sold in Russia. The different co-operatives traversed the following evolution at a speed now higher, now lower: first, combination for selling; then also for buying equipment (especially incubators) through the general organization; next a common efficiency expert (the "agronomist"); finally (a very recent matter) the building of up-to-date poultry coops to be owned and managed in common—and there we are on the very threshold of the *colchos*!

In the grain co-operatives, which have been again, and radically, transformed in the course of the past year, a similar evolution takes place, but at a very rapid rate owing to the peculiar nature of the business; for the most difficult transition, that from the "plain" sales-and-buying co-operative to the producing co-operative, the *colchos* proper, asserts its importance at the very beginning. The State, moreover, tries to speed the process in many ways, now by supplying the grain co-operatives with surveyors and "agronomists," now by a peculiar ruling which makes a minority vote in favour of a combination of whatever degree binding upon the village community as a whole. For example, if a third of the farmers in a village are in favour of an "improvement," the village must adopt it. In awarding credits and in advance buyings ("contractations"), and other forms of assistance, the State demands a "minimum yield," and the observance of certain provisions designed to increase the yield per acre. Now, when

Moscow, September, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

a third of the individuals in a village have accepted such obligations, the latter are binding upon everyone in the community! The "minimum yield" thus works automatically toward stimulating further combining.

The "tractor-columns" are regarded as another useful "lever." They are all in the hands of the "Central Union of Co-operatives" (the *Khlebotsentr*), which rents them to the co-operatives, primarily, in return for payments in kind. But they drag not only ploughs behind them! They bring poolings of land, and poolings of seed, and so on, because their use lays a common lien upon the whole community as soon as a third of the farmers have accepted assistance.

But the strongest "lever" of all, at least in the spheres of wheat, flax, sugar-beets, and cotton, is the "contractation"—the advance of money on the crop, an assurance that the peasants will deliver a certain amount in kind to the State. A good quarter of the total acreage of farmland in the Soviet Union is to-day being worked under the "contractation" system. Of late the State, through extremely interesting regulations, has been making "contractations" with independent private farmers as well. The reason is this: there is nothing more natural than that when independents have undertaken contracts of the sort they will begin pooling resources with other independents who are working under similar contracts, and thus find themselves on the road to co-operation with all the prospects and possibilities that co-operation has in the Soviet Union to-day!

The full power that seems to lie in this particular "lever" the State is using most characteristically in favour of its general theories in the latest regulations it has issued. It has devised a "reciprocity-supply contract," whereby it undertakes to cover all the needs of the *colchoses* or co-operatives that accept such contracts; and this applies not only to farming materials, but also to "goods necessary for everyday life." The State specifically states that the peasant is less strongly attracted by money than by commodities. Thus the shortage of commodities, which has caused such irritation among the peasantry, becomes a weapon in the hand of the State! If an ordinary co-operative becomes a *colchos*, it can, as a *colchos*, barter its

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

produce with the State on a much broader basis than was possible in its earlier stage of collectivization. But the best chances of getting a maximum of supplies from the State are enjoyed by a *comchos*, a "commune." The new "reciprocity contract" provides a powerful stimulus, accordingly, for making "closed agricultural units" of the *colchos-comchos* type. But there is still a refinement possible! The *comchos* is at a better advantage than before if it accepts a "contractation." There, indeed, it is very close to the Socialistic ideal; for not only is everything within it collectivized, but its only customer and purveyor is "Socialized society," or in simpler terms, the "Socialist State!"

Of course, in the grain regions the peasant "stands on one leg," and the socialization process is very rapid. The same rate of progress could not be expected in regions where there are fruit, vegetables, and other "quality" produce.

From the combination of "contractation" with the *colchos* of different grades there is now unfolding, in almost frightening nearness, the picture of a future development of Soviet agriculture into a closed system as regards consumption, production and selling alike. At any rate, following a course of strict economic logic, "harmless" co-operatives are evolving on Russian soil into a Socialism that is more or less pure. The State is doing everything, using every possible means, even coercion, to turn everybody in that direction. The collective interest demands that the individual farmer disappear at the earliest possible moment. Individuals recently have been excluded from the benefit of tractors. Last year the credit organizations were still issuing most of their loans to individuals. This next year the far larger share, as the result of political pressure to be sure, will go to co-operatives, collectives, and *comchoses*. In all questions of surveying and combining lands the village majority, voting on a collective basis, has the power to decide (in other words, the "poor" peasant, the controlling interest in the *colchos*, is the one who decides). And the same situation prevails in the "contractation." The independent "rich" peasant is now more or less what the staging is to a new house—it will be torn down when the work is done. Independent co-operatives are to enjoy only

SOVIET RUSSIA

for a short time still the favours which the State has been showering on co-operatives in general; they have got to join in with the great network of national co-operatives! How close the co-operatives are being drawn to the "Socialist sector" of general Soviet economy is indicated by the treatment of profits. The profits of the "tractor-columns" used by the grain co-operatives are added to working capital. The tractors themselves are sold by stock companies, and the profits of these are devoted to other State purposes, preferably to the funds for industrialization. In case of rising prices, payments in addition to those specified in the "contractations" are granted to independent peasants. Otherwise they could take no interest in contractations at all. Such payments are never made to a *colchos*. A necessary compromise on the part of Socialism and, in reality showing State capitalistic traits of an exploitative character—for the *colchos* is certainly exploited under this arrangement!

The structure of the co-operatives imitates the administrative pyramid of the government more or less exactly, gradually approaching a closed socialistic system of planned economy. The *colchos* are combined in larger organizations, called *kusts*, which, at this moment, are developing with great rapidity, and stand on an equal footing with the district organizations of the co-operatives. Discussion is now in progress as to whether the *colchoses* should sell their grain directly to the grain organizations of the districts, or whether the selling should all be in the hands of the *kust*. One has the feeling that the process of centralization is to continue till a rigid central control of all Soviet economy on a collective basis has been worked out. *Kusts* will gradually be formed for all the branches of produce and not just for grain, as is the case at present.

We are now, of course, only at the beginning of the far-reaching and deep-reaching development of which I have just given a bird's eye view, and—every offensive "wears itself out as it progresses!" We must still await the future to see just how much resistance realities offer to this present plan. Despite the standard orthodox economic doctrine, it is showing unquestionable vigour to-day. This is due to several causes: the terrible shortage in rural Russia of the necessaries

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

for farming and living; the continuous splitting up of the farms into smaller units; the decline of the large landed estates; and of the much persecuted large-scale farmers; the forced breakdown, unavoidable after the overturn of 1917, of the old-style farming structure of the Russian village. The State has an overwhelming strategic position through its control over, and direct management of, the whole manufacturing system of the country, and of all the distribution—of business, in the narrower sense of the term. But the very fact that it can cover the actual demand only in part, turns out very much in its favour through the chance it thus has of favouring the co-operatives and the *colchoses*. In a little less than a year's time rural Russia, which was trying to fix its own prices, determine the amount of work it would do, and even decide on the quantities it would sell to the State, has been made aware of the State's absolute supremacy; by the unchaining of a rural class-war against the surplus-producers; by the State's development of huge grain farms on its own land; by the creation of the *colchos* system, which seems to make individual prosperity superfluous; and finally by the positive demonstration that the country could come to terms with the city, if only it would follow the city's lead! By closely co-ordinating the co-operative and collective system with the government, and with the Party organization the State has succeeded in working out a comprehensive and finely articulated system of initiative and control over Russian agriculture at large. All this gives the "leverage" system, which was first devised in the name of Socialization, its unquestioned power.

In a speech at Harvard University a year ago, Mr. Owen Young declared that he was beginning to doubt whether the present capitalist system represented the very ultimate of human wisdom. He spoke with some warmth of the possibility of re-organizing things on a co-operative basis. The use which the Soviet State—equipped to be sure with every conceivable advantage of dictatorial sovereignty—has been making of the co-operative system, would seem further to justify a doubt as to whether co-operativism is likely to provide a settled economic order. It seems to lead to pure Socialism!

SOVIET RUSSIA

THE NEW *Mir*

(Saratov, September 2nd, 1929.)

I have just visited a great farm of the "collectivized" type located in the south of the "Rayon of Saratov," on the boundaries of the newly formed "Rayon of the Lower Volga"—a district almost as large as Germany. This *colchos* bade fair to offer a trustworthy measure of the success attained by the Socialization policy which the Party dictating over Russia has been prosecuting for a year past with a rapidly increasing enthusiasm and on a larger and larger scale.

This *colchos* was formed in August of last year, and, as it were, out of whole cloth. The whole village joined. There were no preliminary stages, such as have been common in other places. The members leaped directly from "individual farming" into the Socialist system; and this, in their case meant giving up their personal property for the most part in favour of a business partnership and a community-living not as yet organized. Once the *colchos* existed, it quickly attracted a wider membership. I note the fact in passing. Just how all this came about, what general causes made it possible, the effects it is having on the people who at present constitute it, or will some day be embraced within it, are not my concern just here.

The *colchos* in question owns 3,400 *ba* (hectares), and has a membership of 1,070 souls (if one may speak of "souls," in Russia). In their former status as "individuals," the members used to cultivate about 500 *ba*—the rest was pasture land. Last year the State collected 3,000 poods of wheat from this village. Now, after the "collectivization," 1,750 *ba* are under cultivation, and there are hopes of delivering to the State, for the use of the cities, perhaps 100,000 poods. This year's crop through all this region is better than average. Last year's was lower than average. This makes the comparison of acreages especially important. It is also significant that the better managed independent farms in the neighbourhood have been showing about the same results as the *colchos*. The elevator, which receives the grain destined for State-controlled trade, last year handled about 10 per cent. of the crop. The leaders of the *colchos* say that this year it will handle 75 per cent.

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

In this *colchos*, land, and "live," and "dead" inventory have been communized. Not so the daily living of the members. The families with their children live in separate houses, for the most part, and do their cooking and eating there. The members share in the yearly profit (people still speak of "profits") to an amount corresponding to the number of days they have actually worked. Wages are scaled on six different levels; but the tasks corresponding to the various levels are assigned in rotation, so that over a year's time, at least, an approximate equality is attained all around. In anticipation of the annual accounting, wages are paid on a day basis, at an average of from 70 to 75 kopeks, and for the most part in necessities of all sorts supplied by the village co-operative.

A "farming plan" for the whole year is laid out by an "agronomist," who usually serves more than one *colchos*, and whose salary is divided between them. The *colchos* has an "administration" made up of an overseer and four members. Then the village is divided into "groups," which keep in touch, very close touch, with the "Administration," through "foremen." As I had occasion to observe in other places, the "Board" contains not only peasants, but also "rural intellectuals," for example, teachers and factory workers eager for distinction, who are sent to the country by the Party in Moscow. Such leaders are chosen by the village community, even when not all the village belongs to the *colchos*, as was the case with the village here in question. This *colchos* confessed to two former *kulaks* in its membership. They had just been admitted. In fact, on the table in the room where the superintendent, a man most willing to give information, received me, lay a curious document. It was the deed whereby one of the *kulaks* transferred two horses, a mill, and various farming machines to the *colchos*, paying in addition (as is usually the case) a membership fee of 200 roubles. The paper began: "I hereby request the Administration to take all my property over into the general fund, and to wit, one mill, etc. . . ." The body of the document was written in the easy free-running hand characteristic of the book-keepers in the cities. Underneath came the heavy half-illiterate signature of the sometime *kulak* who was "socializing" his possessions.

SOVIET RUSSIA

In the yards outside threshing was going on. The work was being done by Russian machines made at Kharkov—very simple affairs that offered few surprises when it came to making repairs. The power was being furnished by the motors on some American tractors. There was good humour everywhere—the good humour of a rich harvest; and perhaps something else; a feeling that those who were working the machines were threshing their own grain! It was almost dinner time. A stove had been built in the open air for the preparation of the common meal—meat and potatoes!

Good book-keeping in this collective system of farming is much more difficult to carry on than production itself. The leaders say that they will have to change from “capitalistic” to “Socialistic” accounting—in other words, try to arrive at an exact budgeting of consumption by the members. There are plenty of book-keepers, and they may be had very cheaply, for private business is rapidly disappearing so far as it has not already disappeared. However, the change of system is not easy. It will first be necessary to devise a uniform system of book-keeping for all the “collective” farms in the region. All this may mean that the development of scientific control over the auditing system for such enterprises is lagging behind farming organization proper.

In many cases small *colchoses* already existing are being combined into larger ones. Indeed, the pressure of the general development is such that fusions are being made, or at least proposed, even in cases where the “collectives” are less than a year old. I happened to attend the organization meetings of two such “combines” during one day! They were each to be formed by three *colchoses*, which were themselves by no means small ones. They had grown very rapidly, and attained their perfection in the Socialistic sense during the month of July. One of the *colchos* had comprised 28 farms last year. It now had 150. The second had grown from 22 to 48, the third from 8 to 52. Animals, machinery and buildings had been pooled in July. Now, six weeks later, this fusion on a large scale was at hand. Seven tractors were available at the moment. They would enable the *colchos* to plant 600 *ha* in place of the 350 usual in the past. Plans for the mills and dairies were

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

under way, as well as new barns for the common shelter of the cattle now scattered over the several farms.

Meantime the peasants complain about the scarcity of new parts for the tractors and of the heavy wear on the machines. I visited a *colchos* in a village in this neighbourhood which was two years old. It had been formed, under energetic encouragement from government officials, by eight of the very poorest farmers. It had a tractor which had broken down and was lying idle for lack of parts. The detail illustrates why the "combines" are taking place as a matter of course. It is easier to get the government to supply parts for seven tractors than it is for one tractor.

In the village where this "combine" is being formed, only 35 per cent. of the existing farms are "collectivized." The *kulaks*, in other words, any independent farmer able to produce a surplus at all considerable, are still busy. There is talk that they have tried to murder this person or that: that they have tried to burn a bridge; that they make fun of the peasants who have been "collectivized." The meeting which was to make the important decision as to the formation of the "combine," was attended by ninety people, from a total of 250 farms. The only debate—and it consisted mostly of questions—related to the entrance fees which the *colchoses* would have to pay to enter the "combine." The fee was eventually fixed as 10 kopeks a *ha*, with a further monthly contribution of 10 kopeks a *ha* to be made to the "combine" treasury.

Then came the election of the "Administration." The chairman of the meeting was a young Communist. He said simply: "The Party proposes the following five persons to serve on the Board, and two others to serve as alternates." No nominations from the floor were invited. An "auditing commission" was also appointed, and it contained only Communists. I asked a woman who was present why she had entered the *colchos*. She answered that her husband had already gone in with his horse, but she had still to attend to a pig and the cow. "Later on," she added, quite gratuitously, "the machines will do all our work!" It was perhaps a mistake to question just that woman, since she was sitting at the Board's table. However, it seemed to me that the motions proposed

SOVIET RUSSIA

by the chairman received very slender majorities, when it came to voting, if they had majorities at all. Only the "yeas" were called for. There was no "Any opposed?"

I also visited a "commune," in other words, a "collective" of the most evolved type, where daily life, as well as property, was communized. This "commune" suffered for a long time from the constant changing in membership, which used to be characteristic of almost all "collectives." It had tried its fortunes on many sites in this region, but without much success until last year, when Moscow began taking an interest in it. It settled on its present holdings (formerly uncultivated land) three years ago. At that time it was 20,000 roubles in debt. It now estimates its property (evidently too high) at 200,000 roubles. The initial capital was 3,000 roubles, supplied by three peasants, the only real peasants in the organization; for it is largely made up of veterans of the Civil Wars. At the last harvest it delivered 12,000 poods of wheat to the State co-operatives. This year its deliveries may reach 40,000 poods, with a reserve of 8,000 more (2,000 for local food consumption, and 6,000 for seed, as against 3,000 kept for seed last season).

Here all property is held in common, strictly so; for in other collectives there are almost always certain limits to communization. The "commune" attends even to the little needs of life, which are, of course, very primitive: coffee, sugar, salt, cloth, and even mustard. At first the members were allowed to draw on the "commune" for anything "necessary for consumption." Now the "commune" is going back to a money-system with fixed wages paid, on a basis of 71 kopeks a day. Women share on an equal footing with the men. Two large "living-houses" have been constructed, partly through "building credits." Married couples live in apartments of their own. As I found to be the case in "communes" elsewhere in Central Russia and the Ukraine, there are special "children's sections," where the young live and are reared apart from their parents.

Here, then, are a few details from the *colchos* and socialization movement in the rural districts of Russia—a rough sketch in broad lines, based on relatively scanty data. But from my

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

own observations elsewhere during the past months, and from what others have reported, I am inclined to believe that the above picture is not essentially different from what is to be found in thousands of other "collectives" in European Russia and in the Ukraine, though in these regions the Socialistic colouring is somewhat more sharply stressed in certain particulars than elsewhere. Siberia, for instance, requires very special consideration, for truly gigantic "collectives" are being developed there which, in view of the very sparse population, have almost nothing in common with the large-scale "collectives" of European type.

THE FIVE YEARS' PLAN

(Moscow, early June, 1929.)

The gigantic scheme of determining in advance and in all its details for a period of five years (down to October 1st, 1933) the whole development of Soviet economy, including the State budget, has encountered a great deal of scepticism, and not only abroad. The recent struggle between Stalin's Centre and the Right Opposition revolved about the Five Years' Plan—as the Soviets say, the *Pyatiletka*.

The quarrel was indeed worth while. It was a question of a great awakening of all the material forces, fabulous in extent, that have so far been slumbering in this vast country which covers a sixth of the earth's surface; and the awakening was to take place at a terrific speed. Other countries, Germany, England, the United States, have taken decades to bring their domestic resources into full service. The Soviet Union is setting out to do that, or at least the better half of it, in half a decade! Alongside the hut of the primitive peasant; the modern sky-scraper—and no questions allowed!

Yurovski, the outstanding financial expert in Soviet Russia, declared that he regarded the *Pyatiletka* as a "magnificent expression of determination!" Such faint praise already passes as criminal heresy. A small army of bourgeois experts have vanished from circulation because they raised voices of warning, with statistics and arguments based on capitalistic experience. Because the Opposition of the Right stood with them, it was all the more lustily assailed for lukewarmness of

SOVIET RUSSIA

Communist faith, for lack of confidence in Communist methods. So, the quietus, all around, on all signs of timidity! The realization of the Plan is simply being taken for granted! And to-day, after an agitation which did not allow the doubters even to open their mouths, the *Pyatiletka* is a Communist dogma; and anyone desirous of remaining in the Party must pocket any doubt he may have that within the next five years the Soviet Union is to change "from an industrial agrarian State, to an agrarian industrial State."

This the attitude toward scepticism in Soviet Russia! With the things wisecracks abroad may be thinking or saying no one in Russia, to my knowledge, has thought it worth while to concern himself!

I can enter here only into the most summary description of the Plan, and just as summarily into the conditions affecting its realisation. One must bear in mind that the most remote corner of the Russian domain to-day has its own Five Year Plan, and the most general statistics themselves fall into hundreds of classifications!

On the whole the Plan for the development in view is conceived "vertically." Of the 48 billions of roubles which are proposed for the upbuilding of industry, only 22 per cent. are assigned to the "light" industries which cover the country's domestic consumption. The centre of gravity lies in "heavy" industry; for example, in the manufacture of machinery and the building of power plants; and that means that very broad bases are to be laid for covering, later on, all the needs of the country in respect of manufactured articles.

This outlook inclines one to feel that the Plan is inspired by definitely political ideals; the Soviet Union must be made independent of a world supposed to be hostile by nature to the Socialist Soviet Republics. That the bourgeois world will some day make war on the Soviet Union every Communist takes for granted. But, in any event, the independence in question is just as necessary for times of peace. Russia must not fall into the hands of foreign capital! There is every reason to fear the influence of bourgeois loan-makers and bourgeois concessionaries on the development of the Soviet system. The Plan, to this extent and at bottom is thus a

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

colossal defence-measure against all sorts of danger ; it is an entrenchment thrown out to guarantee the undisturbed development of the Socialist idea on Russian soil. Its ultimate motivation lies in political considerations of the highest importance and of unusual depth. Only on such an assumption are the breadth, the enthusiasm, and, last but not least, the ruthlessness with which the Plan reaches out into the future, to be understood.

The Plan bears all the earmarks of that radicalism, that unflinching hardness of Communist determination, which are incarnate in Stalin's person. The inhabitants of the Soviet Union are to-day in want of many things which are regarded in the West as necessities of life ; and not even the Russians can nowadays be called exactly primitives. They have been allowed to foretaste, or they have at least been promised, too many appetizing things. Nevertheless, and although the shortage in foodstuffs especially is growing daily, the Five Year Plan makes, as has been the case all along, a radical sacrifice of the production of goods necessary for daily consumption to "vertical" progress—to the creation of the instruments necessary for an independent Soviet economy. While the Soviet Union as a whole is creating means for the production of wealth, the population of the country is to remain poor, wretchedly poor as compared with pre-War standards of the West, which were, in many respects, the standards of Russia also. The good effects of this struggle for economic independence will not really be enjoyed in terms of stomach, in terms of well-being, till the next generation. There is something Prussian in the deliberateness with which the individual is expected fully to subordinate himself to the welfare of the State, and with which extreme abnegation is set up as the pre-requisite to all greatness. We are told, to be sure, that in the cities the income of common mortals will come to be 60 per cent., and of factory-hands, 90 per cent. higher than those of "workers in New York and Berlin." But there is little probability that those sums will be reached, or that, if they are, they would find adequate opportunities to be utilised. And, meantime, the State income is to be doubled, while the national income is to rise only by a half!

SOVIET RUSSIA

The demands which the Plan is to make on all Russians are carried farthest in the case of the peasants. There, too, politics provide the principal impetus: as with countries abroad, so in domestic life, the Socialist kernel of the State must be made independent of forces foreign to its nature, or at least make them subordinate to itself. According to promises, the wages of industrial workers are to be almost doubled (90 per cent.). The prices on agricultural products, which stand roughly around pre-War levels, are to be forced down still lower! There is some truth in a mischievous remark of the Opposition that the Soviet Régime is restoring the rule of the Tartar khans over the Russian peasantry! Huge amounts will be invested in agriculture as well, but in order to transform it completely, mechanize and socialize it through the organization of large-scale farming, and eliminate the individual peasant as an economic factor altogether. Proletarians everywhere! The newly founded *colchoses* seem to be giving surprisingly good results. But what will happen when the profits are all claimed by the State and the peasant observes at harvest time just where the jolly ride is ending? When he discovers that his labour is being made serviceable to the cause of Socialism in Russia to a far larger extent than it ever was before? This experiment in the thoroughgoing concentration of all, absolutely all, forces in the country requires the mobilization of 73 billion of roubles over a period of five years, at a time, of course, when the rouble has a value considerably lower than fifty kopeks.

The whole enterprise might be headed with the word "if." The funds are to be, in fact can only be, raised from the current production of Russian economy as a whole. *If* the government succeeds in lowering production costs in industry, which are now too high; *if* the production of the individual Russian is almost doubled; *if* it proves possible to reduce wholesale prices by about 25 per cent. and retail prices by only 12 per cent.; then, according to the calculations of the Plan, the earnings thus made would cover the more important fraction of the basic costs of execution. The State already controls a very large part of the business; but such huge sums of money will be available only in case, by 1933, 68 per

THE WAR FOR THE PEASANT

cent. of a Soviet economy by then enormously increased in bulk will have been Socialized, as against a present 52 per cent. And these fabulous profits, which really amount to an exceedingly high taxation, will be sufficient only in case domestic loans of between five and six billions are further available during this time, and foreign credits themselves are considerably increased—by about 143 per cent. (the exact figure has not been published). Then what is left can be attended to by direct taxes and excises. If all this comes true, why then . . .

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS

Half of one of the five years, one tenth of the period fixed, had gone by on the first of April last. One cannot fail to note that, in the domain of all those "ifs," only a small fraction of what was asked for has been realized. The "men of little faith," the Opposition, are stressing the fact; but what they say, at bottom, is that such a Plan is practicable only on the assumption that adequate reserves be available. Now there are no such reserves. The overstrained speed of industrialization maintained hitherto has not permitted the accumulation of reserves: it has merely reduced such as may have existed. A country without enough cement and bricks! A country that cannot find enough paint to protect its long-distance power cables from the weather! A country destitute of all the accessories to construction! That is the country which is plunging into such a Plan? How much friction between city and country has been occasioned by such industrial progress as has already been achieved in the short period of intensive effort just past! What huge losses it has entailed—of them the falling off in wheat production has been only one! Yet now, under virtually the same conditions, and with the same violent methods that cut both ways, still further demands are to be made, still greater risks are to be run! For if the Plan miscarries, if there is a slip anywhere in the machinery, if the country gets short of wind, then the economic structure of Russia, already miserable enough, will be hurled into a catastrophe of unparalleled magnitude!

Thus speaks the Opposition. And the answer? To-day the government announces the assignment of 2.5 billions
Moscow, early June, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

additional to the Supreme Economic Council in charge of industry, for the acceleration of its labours. That is the answer! The experiment goes on! The greatest, and, in many respects, the most up-to-date experiment of all time! An original experiment, and not in the sense, merely, of being queer! If it succeeds by as much as three-quarters, there will be no doubt of ultimate victory!

It would be the victory of the Socialistic method, won by the efforts of a gifted, unexhausted people still capable of believing! We may conceive such a victory possible only on the assumption that it is being fought for on a new platform; on the assumption, namely, that the function of money in a system socialistically organized, in a system such as is exemplified by the Soviet Union to-day, is a different function and a much more modest one, than money fulfils in the capitalistic world, which is prey to a gigantic network of debts and credits, and lives under a constant compulsion to produce profits.

There are grounds for believing that Soviet economy is applying just such a doctrine in many of its activities; that, in the eyes of the Soviet Régime, money reduces itself, in fact, to a mere matter of book-keeping. In most transactions in industry, and soon, the Kremlin hopes, in agriculture also, the State is buyer and seller, debtor and creditor, all in one person. In this lies the decisive secret of the Five Year Plan and its calculations. This is its controlling presupposition, just as the demonstration of it will be the prize of victory, if victory there be.

The world will have every reason to follow the experiment with the closest attention. The history of War reparations shows what deep respect, what boundless reverence, is paid to money in the West. Supposing now the *Pyatiletka* in Soviet Russia should turn out in such a way that the "masses" of the world become convinced that even money may be conquered?

CHAPTER II

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

In many respects and in many of its districts, Georgia is still an individualistic, mediæval country. Traditions and points of view may be noted, even among very humble people, which European usage commonly styles "chivalric." The territory is still littered with "feudal barons," not a few of whom are serving in the Red Army of the Grusines. The people is given to hospitality. It sings. It drinks, with a number of picturesque drinking rites. Whether in backward villages, or in small towns, or in large cities, I was impressed by a conspicuous pride, a certain grandiloquence in address, a very formal politeness; by the feuds and the warlike traditions. Indeed, the Georgian Communists have many times induced me to forget that their Party also is a party of workers and peasants and looks upon all bourgeois with puritanical severity. When one meets a Russian Communist one feels immediately that he is a Russian Communist. The Georgian Communists I met impressed me as distinctively Georgian Communists. Somehow they evince very markedly the temperament, the tone, the feeling, of their region. That may explain why they have been able to rule it.

Nevertheless, Georgian Communism works in closest sympathy with the Central Party in Moscow, and submits just as wholeheartedly to "Party discipline." This year's war on private capital was waged as vigorously in Georgia as in Soviet Russia. I was proudly informed at Batum that in that city private enterprises had decreased in number by 25 per cent. within twelve months. If traffic in the harbour was at a standstill, that was due to policies of the Foreign Trade Monopoly, and represented the "inexorable will of the Party." The number of empty stores in the small towns is striking, and not less striking the worried faces and the despondent language of the business men who still survive. Everywhere one

Suchum-Kalé, November, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

encounters schools and churches that have been closed, though, in these respects there has been a certain tolerance for Mohammedans. Ninety-nine of every hundred judges in the courts are Communists with hardly any legal training, though once in a while a former jurist is to be found acting as clerk of courts.

Behind everything in Georgia one senses that the propelling force, the force that steers, is Moscow. But the remark might also be reversed with some justice. The secretary of the All-Russian Party is Stalin-Djugashvili, a Georgian; and Georgia has always played a prominent rôle in the Party of the Russian Communists, not to mention the Party of the Russian Mensheviks. However, the atmosphere in Georgia inclines towards "peaceful assimilation." In the government at Tiflis and in the independent regencies of Adjara (Batum) and Abkasia (Suchum), non-Party members are to be found in responsible positions, especially in departments dealing with economic matters. It is this atmosphere of relative toleration that distinguishes Georgian Communism from the orthodox Communism of Russia.

THE GEORGIAN REVOLT

(Suchum-Kalé, November, 1924.)

But there is, to compensate, a second anomaly, as compared with the Russian model. The "Angel of the Revolution" still soars with wings unclipped over Georgia! In Russia, the *Tcheka* has been brought under the common law as the G.P.U. In the Caucasus this dreaded police is still legally functioning with all its "extraordinary powers"; and a high official of the organization in West Georgia informed me that he would not even deign to argue with a representative of the government proper as to the competence of the *Tcheka* to deal with any matter it chose to deal with! The *Tcheka*, through its "Collegium" or "general staff," exercises powers of life and death. There is no appeal from its sentences, and they are carried out, usually after four or five hours.

Georgia had no experience of "War-Communism," nor of the systematic Terror—it came under Bolshevik power after the declaration of the NEP. Menshevism, in fact, subsisted all the way down to the recent revolt, and with a certain

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

organization as an "unofficial Party." To make a rough guess, perhaps a fifth of the population is frankly Menshevist. The Dictatorship in Tiflis never saw fit to abandon its toleration; though now, after the revolt, there is a feeling that perhaps too many concessions were made to Menshevism during the first years (even Lenin seems to have thought for a time of collaborating with the Mensheviks in Russia). But one may imagine that if the *Tcheka* is still asserting unlimited powers in the Caucasus it is because of an uncertainty as to whether the break with pre-Revolutionary and Menshevist days has been made absolute and complete. The Mensheviks themselves supplied the *Tcheka* with a pretext for making up for lost time in many things which it had previously neglected. I am not thinking merely of the 320 executions officially admitted—a statistic terrible enough; but rather of the general "house-cleaning" in the public services.

In any event, the concentration of Communist power in the hands of the *Tcheka* is the decisive factor in the present situation in Georgia. The recent revolt would never have been ventured without illusions as to help from England and France which were systematically, and with incredible irresponsibility, nourished everywhere. On this subject Menshevist elements both in the towns and in the country still speak with the greatest bitterness. But the revolt broke out, and could break out, only in the rural districts. And there the *Tcheka* is now exercising powers that are in fact "extraordinary." I shall never forget a detail which I observed in a primitive neighbourhood far back in the country. A peasant was sitting in front of his cottage, when an officer of the *Tcheka* came riding by. The peasant rose and saluted, instinctively! Only carefully-selected individuals are admitted to service in the *Tcheka*. I hear on all sides that public peace and personal security prevail in this tormented country to an extent unprecedented in its history. It is only fair to note the point!

However, no one would assert that the country is swallowing the cold, dry orthodoxy of a foreign Communism with gusto, or that the blessings brought by the *Tcheka* are regarded as compensating for its unremitting and unescapable oppression. The revolt expressed a widespread discontent—it would be

SOVIET RUSSIA

absurd to disguise the fact. It is true that its geographical extension was not very large. It never reached the coast. The five or six different outbreaks were suppressed on the spots where they occurred.

The episodes were grossly exaggerated in the European Press. German newspapers for weeks published reports of battles at Poti, battles at Batum, Kutais, and even Baku. At one moment Tiflis and Baku were said to be the only towns still in Bolshevik hands. Such "news" must have come from people who were interested in deceiving their friends (and succeeded in doing so), the truth not being sufficiently "useful"!

But though the "uprising" consisted merely of localized outbreaks and, with its pitiable resources, managed to survive some forty-eight—at the very most sixty—hours, it gave the Communist leaders plenty to think about. They say, and say truly, that for a part of the country, especially in Mingrelia, the revolt was led by land-barons, wearing their Tsarist uniforms and decorations; then by priests; and finally, by business men ruined by competition with State enterprise. Such peasants as participated had been incited and provided with weapons by these bourgeois malcontents. Certainly the bourgeois elements in the small towns, the particular victims of the Party, sympathized with the movement in various ways. Evidence of this is available from many quarters. At Sesnak, a few hours after the city had been taken, the real estate and the stores were "divided back again," with corresponding effect upon workers and peasants: when the revolt was put down, it was the peasants who were most blood-thirsty in calling for the punishment of the land-barons and their followers.

This official picture of the revolt is sound so far as it goes. But, for example, in Guria, a highly civilized district, and often called the "cradle of rural Menshevism," the movement was a genuine peasantry revolt. Only fanatics and the uninformed could, or would, overlook the fact.

The Georgian peasant has his grievances: high taxes; continuing high costs of living; the arbitrariness of prices at the co-operatives, which, as a first step towards a Communist system, are being developed with all possible speed in Georgia

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

as well as in Russia. But it would be going too far to say that the peasant is mourning the disappearance of the private store-keeper. He is simply taking his time in accustoming himself to the economic measures introduced, and logically and thoroughly executed, by the Régime: State partnerships, control of credits and deliveries, flexible tax assessments, and so on.

The peasantry, the world over, is the class most critical of its government, and also the least talkative. In Georgia, as well, the peasant is holding his peace on many subjects—he is saying nothing, for example, about the closing of the churches, and about the cultural offensive of Communism. However, the land question is the fundamental question. Bolshevism has dealt with the problem of land distribution in a much more thorough-going fashion than Menshevism. I heard plenty of testimony, even from Menshevists, that the Menshevist Party looked after its members, more particularly, in the new allotments it made. But Communism—here, as in all things, more effective than its antagonists—nevertheless did not go as far in Georgia as it went in Russia: it did not altogether dispossess the “land-barons.” More often they were left with something, so that, as a class, they were still richer than the peasants. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory all around, and the peasants ended by seizing property on their own authority. The barons are now all but extinct.

The agrarian question, however, remains—that “land-hunger” which extends all the way from Guria to Archangel and has not been satisfied even in Georgia. The Georgian Régime has had its experience with the dangers of a schematic Communism resulting in numberless small land-holdings. However, conferences and consultations are daily taking place in an effort to discover ways of helping the peasant. The oppressive rents and the galling restrictions of the old days have vanished, for the peasant. For the most part he has more land than he had before, and he can do as he pleases on it. The only drawback, from his point of view, is the more and more general pressure of the system, which is asserting itself ever more positively and in a thousand little ways.

SOVIET RUSSIA

POLICY OF NATIONALITIES.

(Suchum-Kalé, November, 1924.)

Aside from its liberation of the peasantry, the strongest element in the influence won by the Régime has come from its treatment of the problem of nationalities; and here its solutions show very faint traces of Party orthodoxy. As a means of sparing sensibilities of race, several autonomous republics have been erected within the boundaries of Georgia. Not only has this policy been international, in the best sense of the word; but the treatment of nationalities within the several autonomous domains might serve as a model for Western efforts of the same kind—Versailles for the most part bestowed a “freedom” based on hatreds and intolerance. Abkasia, for example, is a “mixed” country. In a population of 200,000 only 60,000 are Abkasians. Nevertheless, Grusiers and Greeks occupy important posts in the government. An Armenian sits high in the Régime at Batum; and even at Tiflis by no means all the governing body is Georgian.

In the old days the Tsarist government made every effort to Russianize the schools, the bureaucracy, and the language; whereas now, Georgian nationalism meets Russian nationalism with an assertiveness perhaps even more marked than a brotherly internationalism would allow. I attended a dinner at Telav. When it came to the toasts, a Russian officer, high in the Red Army and assigned to duty in Georgia, expressed the wish to participate as one of the hosts, on the ground that he already “felt quite at home in Georgia.” But a young Georgian Communist reminded him: “A Russian is always a guest, in Georgia!” In the schools so much stress is being laid on Georgian subjects that the study of Russian and even the general branches of learning are being neglected. An important Communist official in West Georgia remarked to me that he thought “German or English quite as valuable for the children to learn as Russian.” This is more prevailingly the mood the farther down we go in the pyramid of power. To meet this situation the government has established the unheard-of number of 100 scholarships, to enable that many youthful Crusaders to study each year in Leningrad and Moscow.

Communism is doing everything possible to fasten its

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

grip on the young. In view of the treatment accorded intellectuals in the Communist Party, it is understandable that in the small towns many young people are fanatically Menshevist. Nevertheless, I believe Communism has the greater part, and the better part, of the coming generation on its side—as is the case in Russia. Since 1921, the number of schools has steadily increased over pre-War figures in Georgia, and indeed throughout the Caucasus, whereas education is the gloomy side of the Russian picture. I was impressed by the good discipline and the hard work prevailing in all the Soviet schools, where the old staffs have been retained in very large part, especially the women teachers, on their adoption of Communism. Whenever opportunity offered, I questioned members of the Communist Youth organization (the Komso-moltsi), which “guards the future of the Party.” I found youngsters of excellent promise even in the smallest towns, and they often showed a breadth of grasp, and a natural understanding of Communism lacking in some of the “old” Bolsheviks, who have been trained to their present attitudes in the hard school of experience.

Hostility to “Western capitalism” I found equally strong everywhere. These young people might grow out of their nationalist and Communist ideas into a new picture of the world; but I cannot imagine any future for them which would not be stamped with Georgian features. Both past and present teach that the Caucasus, with its tremendous mixture of peoples and fragments of peoples, and with its culture ever under strain between a primitive barbarism and a high and very peculiar sophistication, can enjoy unity, steadiness and peace only under a mailed fist, managed by a not very liberal intelligence. The mailed fist is available. And so is the intelligence. Only, the intelligence must understand at the outset that there must be room inside the fist for the country itself! The only future at present possible for Georgia is within the bounds of a serious experiment with Communist theory. I mention the point in the belief that Europe should not sacrifice the peace and the blood of the Caucasus on grounds of a hypocritical and deceptive humanitarianism—or just to provide the League of Nations with something to talk about!

SOVIET RUSSIA

COMMUNISM AND OIL

(Baku, October, 1924.)

Baku is petroleum, and petroleum is Baku. That is probably all that Europe cares to know about the Republic of Azerbaijan, of which Baku is the capital. Let us talk about oil, therefore, to clear the way for the country and the people which are so fortunate or so unfortunate as to possess such a treasure.

Wherever you go in Soviet Russia, even in the most widely separated places, you hear the same question: "What is wealth?" At Baku they know the answer: "Wealth is oil!" The region swims in oil, floats in oil. Put down a boring anywhere within an area of two or three hundred square miles and you strike oil! At Bebi-Ebat, near Baku, just before the War, the Caspian was filled in to facilitate borings through the sea bottom. Here any such anxieties as are felt in the United States as to the exhaustion of the oil reserves is unknown. The supply available about Baku has been estimated at some fifty billion tons. What difference does it make if two or three hundred million tons are drawn off each year? Only North Persia seems to be richer in oil.

And yet wealthy Baku is worrying to-day! In economic terms, the city is in poverty. The city is poor, because Russia is poor—in spite of her wealth. The city is rich, the way Russia is rich—in spite of her poverty. The heads and the tails of the same coin!

Oil production at Baku to-day is extensive and well-regulated—that is not the cause of the worrying! I inspected virtually the whole district. The wells are in operation everywhere—some 1,800 towers, altogether, 300 of them new ones, put up within a year. Even production of the costly by-products of oil has reached 72 per cent. of the pre-War output. As is the case further north, at Grosny, German methods are being used to extract gasoline from natural gases. The year's production of crude oil overtopped last year's by 40 million poods. The fiscal year closed on October 1st with a gross product of 252 million poods. That is all very encouraging!

And—as compared with the days of private ownership—

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

are the wells not being worked in a more rational manner? The envies and jealousies, the race for new borings, new fields, is a thing of the past! In Bebi-Ebat the towers of the Soviets rise majestic from the sea in straight schematic lines, as contrasted with the capricious chaos of the former borings. In the old days you dogged your neighbour's footsteps, boring as close to his boundaries as the law would permit, in order to get his oil, or at least to save your own! That sort of thing is over. It is now all the property of Nobody—of the State, that is, in person (for this particular purpose) of one, "Asnepht": the "Azerbaijan Naphtha Trust." "Asnepht" has no neighbours to compete with him. So he bores according to a prearranged plan—from a given centre outwards. "Asnepht" owns everything that once belonged to Nobel and Rothschild, to Englishmen, Persians, Armenians, Russians! Capitalist megalomaniacs and, even worse, the "half-acre jealousies" of the small speculators, all that world of divided wills, of wild, stubborn, conflicting rivalries, are dead. In one place I saw an old woman standing beside a puddle of native oil. She was dipping a rag into the puddle, soaking it in the thick muddy ooze, and wringing it out into a pail. Fuel to sell to her neighbours! And efficiency production! One rag full every forty-five seconds! That old woman had survived Rothschild! Hers was the only private enterprise I saw in operation in all the Baku oil region.

A single central plan, of Communist hue, regulates everything at present. There is no difference in ownership now between the various pipe-lines, through which the oil can be pumped for tremendous distances. The power stations likewise are all on a single footing. Repair stations and supply-houses for tools and new parts are located at strategic intervals for common use (to tell the truth, they are not as well stocked as they might be). There is no complaining about "half-flows" and "quarter-flows." There are no failures because of unlucky borings. Every drop of oil that is drawn goes to the same refineries. The tankers on the Caspian (and before long now, on the Black Sea) are at the service of all the wells; and so are the tank-cars on the railroads. Does not all that mean saving, a forward step toward standardized production? Now

Baku, October, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

that this giant industry is free to do as it pleases, it would seem that its solvency as a business proposition would have been placed beyond all doubt.

Yet the wells are operating with a very marked deficit! Baku is the victim of too great production costs, of inadequate markets and inefficient marketing! The truth is masked in all sorts of ways. It is fairly clear, however, that the high costs of production are somehow attributable to the schematic, the mechanical, character of the bureaucratic management. Down to a few weeks ago, "Asnepht" was concerned only with production. The marketing was handled by the "State Naphtha Syndicate" in far-away Moscow. The natural connections between producing and selling were thus interrupted. Small wonder that "Asnepht" has at last been forced to consider costs of production from the accountant's point of view! The oil districts will henceforth be represented in the "Naphtha Syndicate"! A step forward! But some of the inefficiency must be attributed to the artificial crippling of economic interest on the part of the manufacturers. The "Naphtha Syndicate," wittingly or unwittingly, set the prices on oil from Baku too low. Production costs, to-day, including amortization, stand at thirty-two kopeks the pood. The State, for considerations of policy, has not been giving that much, and is now inclined to give even less. Depression of prices, to strengthen the co-operative retail trade! Exactly what took place, also, in textiles! Has "Asnepht" always been paid what it deserved? Have its actual profits not been diverted to other purposes in Moscow?

But even considered apart from questions of marketing, production costs are in themselves too high. The opinion is often expressed, both orally and in print, that they are actually in excess of the thirty-two kopeks mentioned. It is said that the well machinery is superannuated and worn out, and eats up all the profits. There is talk now of introducing the American rotary system—wisdom after long and costly experience! I visited a large and well-equipped refinery. It was working at full speed. But everything seemed "run-down." The equipment was carrying the greatest possible load. I was assured that necessary repairs would soon be provided;

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

and in fact I remarked everywhere the closest attention to the machinery and a most conspicuous economizing. But is such parsimony not expensive in the long run? Out among the wells one notes too much breakage in the working machinery, the use of too many makeshifts, too great a lack even of paint! This was because the annual appropriations for equipment and materials had been exhausted by the end of the third quarter. Now the section-superintendents must get the approval of the central management before incurring the slightest expense. All such difficulties cannot fail to add greatly to costs. Large orders for equipment were placed abroad during the past months, many of them in Germany down to the time of the raid on the Soviet Trading Agency in Berlin. But any general overhauling is not in sight; and one might doubt whether even that would be enough for solvent production.

THE DAM ON THE DNIEPER (Dnieprstroi, October, 1928).

The dam that is being erected at Dnieprstroi will raise the water for some ninety miles upstream above the uppermost of the Dnieper rapids. There are six of these. For generations Russians have gazed at them now in anger and now in wonder. Soon the rocks that spread across the stream will be deep under water; and the rapids themselves will be cheated of a privilege they have enjoyed for ages of ruining this noble stream for purposes of navigation. In place of these raging torrents a placid mirror will wind its way across the country; and an ocean-going vessel can steam down from Kiev into the Sea of Azof, and thence out to all the oceans of the world.

The banks of this hitherto useless river are not thickly populated. Only some fifteen villages will have to be destroyed and re-settled farther back on the fertile plain into which the Dnieper has gradually cut its deep gorge. They contain some seven thousand people. All the same, that detail alone will cost seven million roubles. Work has already begun at Kitchkas, a village lying just below Dnieprstroi, the newest town, this latter, in the Soviet Union. Kitchkas has beautiful trees. They too will be deep under water.

The Sixth is the most tumultuous of all the rapids. Taking
Dnieprstroi, October, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

it as the most remarkable, there is nothing very remarkable, as scenery, about any of them. The river bed is broken all along by little stony islands and ledges. At the rapids islets stretch all the way across the stream—a chain of rocks and crags, and a paradise of bird-life. The Dnieper, just here, looks more like a network of big brooks. The cliffs rise steep and high opposite the spectator, silent witnesses to the ages which the river has spent in eating its way—a Pyrrhic victory as it now proves!—into the belt of granite that traverses the Ukraine from south-east to north-west.

At Dnieprstroi, a side canal of eighteenth-century design runs off from the river to drive the wheels of two grist-mills. The canal was dug in the days of Catharine the Great, as was also the lock-canal, on the opposite bank of the river, which carries small flat-bottomed canal boats around the rapids. Catharine once paid a visit to Potemkin when he was governor in the Ukraine, and she may have ordered the building of the mills on that occasion—they are still working, but they show their age. At any rate, they now belong to the State. State ownership of grist-mills is one of the wedges that are being driven into rural Russia in the struggle to Socialize agriculture. At one time the mills must have belonged to a baronial manor which was destroyed to its very foundations during the Revolution. Just beyond the manor site, rising as it were out of nothing, stands a little church of Imperial design. The iron fence around it has been carried away to be used for some other purpose. To the left lies a village. Mills, church, and village will all be drowned some day!

Since work was started a year ago, a million and a quarter cubic metres of earth have been removed at Dnieprstroi. The river is forty-five feet deep just there. The dam will give a utilizable drop of one hundred and ten feet or more, out of a total height of some hundred and ninety feet. It will be half a mile long—the longest dam in the world—if one be not too weary of world-records. On the left bank of the stream a sluice-plant with three sluices nine to twelve feet deep will be erected; and on the right bank, a power station—the same arrangement that Catharine made at the Sixth Rapid 150 years ago! For the present, seven turbines of 50,000 volts capacity

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

each will be installed. There is room for seven more, later on. The Soviets are hoping that they can build turbines of that power themselves. Their German experts proposed turbines of from 80,000 to 100,000 volts, the first of such capacity ever installed. The Americans advised against this idea. We shall see! All in all this will be the largest power plant in Europe.

Soviet industry is in its infancy, yet it plunges into an enterprise of this colossal magnitude! A *tour de force*, and not because of its mere size! For what is to be done with so much power, when it has been developed? Sixty million roubles have already been spent, of a gross future outlay of 200 millions, which are fifty millions more than the costs as originally estimated! Yet the consumer (or consumers) is still to be invented! So—great aluminum works and factories for other metals are being projected—they would certainly be in the spirit of such a venture! The whole procedure would seem extremely hazardous, in the West; but, in Soviet Russia, are not consumption and production both quantities that may be endlessly increased? Will not demand follow quickly on ever so great a production of any kind? The Soviet Régime feels itself master of all such possibilities! On just such reasoning, at bottom, not only the astonishing enterprise at Dnieprstroi, but the whole industrialization policy of the Union, are based!

That the reasoning is sound seems to be confirmed at Dnieprstroi by the further and perhaps permanent serviceability of most of the auxiliary plants established for construction purposes. A little factory set up for producing the liquid air used for blasting purposes in preparing the ground is being used at the same time for the heavy quarry blasting required to provide materials for two colossal stone-crushers that have been found necessary in connection with cement work about the dam (700,000 cubic metres of cement will be required). Later on the crushers will be set to road making, which certain fanatics in the Ukraine think more essential even than industrialization!

The stone-crushers themselves are housed in splendid wooden sheds which experts might find it worth a trip to Dnieprstroi to see. The designs were made by Germans. For the woodwork great carpentry shops have been built, and

Dnieprstroi, October, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

equipped with the best modern machinery. These buildings, too, are worth seeing. They are of Russian make, and will serve other purposes later on. In a word, the enterprise is itself furnishing the first consumers of power, the nucleus of a permanent demand!

There is nothing particularly new about the work on the dam as a dam—this department has been more especially under American influence. Everything will be finished by 1932! Yet an unpractised eye could not believe such a date possible! How comprehensive the general plan! The rail-road bridge at Kitchkas will cross the river at a lower level than the top of the dam! Farther downstream there are to be two other bridges, centring on an island. The longer one, with short spans, will be entirely Russian work; the materials for the shorter one, with a single span, have been imported from abroad. This is just one detail; but it shows how this youthful Soviet Union is being strained to its maximum capacities for production, and even beyond them!

“ON THE JOB?”

(Dnieprstroi, October, 1928.)

A part of the work that is already complete, and in a surprisingly short time, is—everything pertaining to the physical and social welfare of the workers, some eleven thousand in all. This is a splendid example of a typically Soviet application of energy. Its outstanding trait is that it gives the worker a much greater precedence over his work than has been the custom in Europe.

There is a “Main Building”—a large, sunny, handsomely constructed affair. Street after street has been laid out with houses for labourers; houses and cottages for clerks; houses and villas for Russians, foreign engineers, superintendents! To mention moving picture theatres would be to state the obvious. The natural centre of the “city” is a huge dining hall, equipped with the latest kitchen devices (imported from Germany) to serve two thousand meals each day. The daily average so far has been seven hundred, for the Russian working man is in the habit of eating in his own house. The middle-priced menus have proved the more popular. I paid a visit to

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

the refrigerators and store-rooms. They could have been much better filled, my guides explained. There is a food-shortage all over Russia, this year!

The houses built for working men are of various types, most interesting among them what might be called a "political" design, since it pays full tribute to Communist ideals, and builds an interior consisting of a great common living-room, with sleeping quarters for various families leading off from it. In actual experience, this room is "dead"; or at the best it serves as a workroom for doing almost anything. The Russian labourer prefers a home of his own for himself and his family. Such houses are no longer being built—a victory for individualism, after all! Popular, and frequently built, on the other hand, is a sort of apartment-house with a common kitchen and a common dining room. Unmarried labourers live either in small cottages or in large dormitories. In any event, there is good order everywhere, though not all the tenants have perfect manners or the most civilized personal habits. A water-system is in process of construction. At the time of my visit the pipes between the pressure tower and the filtering plant were not yet laid.

The transport and "teaming" is done by peasants, using their own wagons. They live without exception in tents! They are the pariahs of this social order, for they are not members of any trade-union, as one must be, if one would enter the industrial branch of the Soviet system and have solid ground under one's feet!

The average wage, at least the "contract-wage," runs round three or four roubles. The wage fixed by tariff begins at one-and-a-half roubles. However, the actual wage is about half of the nominal wage, though the labourer is provided for at the co-operative stores at remarkably low prices.

These stores operate apparently at a loss; but the thing comes down to this: the State regards the "de-privatizing," the socializing, of trade as more important than the solvency of any particular enterprise from a bourgeois point of view. But even on the soil of Dnieprstroi, never before spotted by capitalist greed, there have grown up, in the face of this Socialist effort, a number of small, but well-stocked private

SOVIET RUSSIA

stores—as if they were the crutches on which Communistic commerce must amble forward for a time! The co-operatives were as badly stocked as they usually are in the remoter rural districts of Russia. There was the same deadly uniformity that appears in all departments of Soviet economic life—and it is as remarkable in what is not there as in what is there. But this proves the *de facto* development of that coherent, uniform Communist economy to which everything in Russia is being more and more generally made to contribute with a deliberate iron-shod logic!

But certain conditions, it would seem, are very much as they would be in the bourgeois world. At Dnieprstroi there is a disquieting increase of venereal diseases, as determined by the usual examinations required by regulations. Last year the rate was negligible. This year it stands at 200 per 1,000—a result of the sudden crowding together of multitudes of people. The presumably low accident rate (the exact figures are not available) is bound to increase with the increasing danger of the construction work. The official forecast, I was told, provides for one fatality to each two or three millions of expenditure.

I gathered an impression of intense energy from the work on the dam—the application, the “hard work,” that only Europe knows! The strictest orderliness prevailed about the construction sites. Not an idle piece of machinery or material was lying about. This bespeaks a stern discipline imposed from above. The matter of efficiency is, however, quite another question. It would seem that the instinct for using complicated machinery is not as highly developed in Russia as in countries of long-standing industrial traditions: hereditary, instead, is the instinct for hand-work. These radical labourers, too, have their points of conservatism! That “Shakhty-neurosis” (evolving from the Shakhty trial), mistrust on the part of the workers of possible sabotage by the engineers, has spread to Dnieprstroi. This was already known in Moscow weeks ago! The slogan of “Control by the Masses” cannot fail of effect on the rhythm of work, and on the enthusiasm of the engineering staffs. That is a difficulty present everywhere in Russia, as is admitted even in the Soviet press.

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

Dnieprstroi is a characteristically Russian enterprise, not only in its methods, but also in its whole spirit. It again shows how slightly the Russians have so far been influenced by the "spirit of the machine," and how "colonial" Russia is in her full readiness to take to any scheme that is new from the bottom up. But this undertaking, so Russian in inspiration, at the same time reveals the dependence of this youthful and ambitious country on the experience of other lands.

The first to be called to Dnieprstroi were the Americans, because the Soviet people thought the natural conditions prevailing in the United States very similar to conditions in Russia (and the different histories of the two peoples, therefore, correspondingly incomprehensible). After the Americans the Germans were invited to help. The two groups are now working side by side and wholly apart one from the other. At Dnieprstroi one finds no trace of the famous "united Capitalist front." Among the lower Soviet engineers there is a "German wing" and an "American wing." It has been discovered that Germans and Americans work in entirely different ways. The higher superintendents are now struggling, accordingly, not only with "comparative technology," but with "comparative national psychology." Is it possible that in this rational world of ours there should be such different traditions, such different ideas, among engineers? The Americans have plenty of enterprise. They are great advertisers. "Old Man" Cooper flays the Germans, at Moscow, in public and in private—he is "a friend of Al Smith," as everybody is told! But at Dnieprstroi relations are so "correct" that Germans and Americans never speak! What is most striking about the Americans is their almost military subordination to their chiefs in far-away New York. Not a definite word, not a final recommendation, till they have "conferred with the office!" The Russians hold the final decision in any event. A foreign engineer who makes a suggestion often does not know whether it has been taken till the work begins.

The Dnieprstroi project was planned by Professor Alexandrov after a trip to the United States. "Citoyen" Winter is general superintendent. On the supervising *Dnieprstroi*, October, 1928

· SOVIET RUSSIA

commission, by a noteworthy exception, there is not a single Communist. But one must not forget that the whole enterprise was, in the last analysis, of an exquisitely political nature. The Opposition forced it through at a time when many individuals now prominently connected with the industrialization programme regarded it as ridiculously ambitious, even fantastic. Dnieprstoi will stand as a monument to proletarian determination, and as one reservoir more for sustaining the influence of the industrial worker in the Soviet State.

Early in the reconstruction period, Lenin raised the slogans of "Electrification" and "Mechanization!" None of the three great power plants built since 1921 are being utilized to the full to-day. But in none of the three cases must the very pre-requisites for utilization be sought in the future to any such extent as is true of Dnieprstoi. Everything, alas, in this boundless and still poverty-stricken country must be "frame," with the picture that is to go into it still unpainted! Can there be any question, after all, of increased consumption and increased production in this land of a hundred and sixty million souls? In the presence of such gigantic forces can one ever act save with reference to the great "Probably" that has always ruled over Russia? Are not "Electrification" and "Mechanization" certain to open up the country?

Such, at any rate, is the romanticism of this Régime which has such limitless faith in human calculations. Even if that romanticism be called mere romance, it stands to the turbines of Dnieprstoi as the poetry of Eichendorff's song:

da drunten in dem Thale
da geht ein Muehlenrad. . . .
("Down there in the valley
A mill-wheel is turning. . . .")

stands to the grist-mills of Catharine the Great!

RUSSIA'S MANCHESTER. THE FACTORY WORKER.
(Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, June, 1929.)

As an industrial centre of the first rank, Ivanovo is one of those eight departments of the Soviet Union which the State is treating with very particular consideration in the food

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

stringency now prevailing. The "flat country" is turning in so very little—perhaps because it has very little to turn in—that even a town as tenderly cared for as Ivanovo is feeling the pinch of shortage. Bread, butter (only fresh salted butter is exported), bran, tea, and a few other staples are on sale, under rationing restrictions, at the co-operatives. A factory man working on full time is allowed to buy 600 grams of bread a day. This allowance is scaled downward to 200 grams for different classifications, till we get to the political outcasts. Their ration is zero grams. They must buy what they need of private merchants at exorbitant prices. Evidently provisioning is assured only for certain classes. Even then, not everybody gets his full ration at all times. This applies especially to tea, and now meat rations have suddenly run short.

The co-operatives, regarded in Russia as temporary substitutes for pure Communism, are doing their best to control the situation. In the little town of Yusha they have a good third of the gross business in hand. That is probably the proportion everywhere. In Yusha virtually the whole population belong to the co-operatives: 7,778 account books as against 11,000 souls! But it is striking that the most essential foodstuffs somehow escape the co-operatives, and must be bought at the market from peasants. The co-operatives, of course, keep prices at the lowest possible levels; but the whole calculation has a defect, somewhere: it is ahead of the facts! The "Socialized sector" of business is not powerful enough. Private business has been badly crippled, but the government has not enough goods in hand to replace it. That is the exciting point in this particular act of the drama of Socialization. What the result must be is clear enough. Wages are based on the price quotations of the co-operatives; but the worker has to fall back in the end on private dealers who sell at high prices. The future of the whole trade structure depends on the successful reduction of this disparity. The co-operatives are doing all they can to monopolize farm produce. They are creating, for example, "Milk Centres."

A visitor walking along one of the lines of shoppers who are waiting their turn at the counter is certain to hear some woman complain: "*Mala! Mala!*"—"Too little! Too

Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, June, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

little!" But complaints come easily. I cannot see that the population, and especially the children, show any special signs of under-feeding. I will even venture that in this roomy town, girt about by resinous forests, the working people are in better general health than is the case in many manufacturing centres of the West.

Looking for statistical confirmation of these impressions, I could get no satisfactory data on tuberculosis; but the social diseases had become rare to an unprecedented degree. What struck me, in this research, was the great number of "official" abortions. A report sent to me from a remote rural centre recorded two hundred abortions against five hundred births.

The average wage hangs between 70 and 80 roubles a month—more than double the average pre-War wage; but the factory hands themselves complain of the diminishing purchasing power of the rouble, a decline especially noticeable at present. There is a trend toward a rise in wages; but the question is whether it balances the loss in purchasing power. Is there not a gradual, but actual, falling off in the effective wage? Taking the average wage as a norm, I gather that a wage-earner with a family larger than five is in difficulties. There are plenty of workers with families whose breakfast consists of a piece of dry bread and a glass of hot water.

The government is struggling heroically, and what is more important, systematically, to raise the standard of living, or at least to ensure an adequate food supply. There is not a forest hamlet so insignificant as to be without its "milk relief" for underfed children. The provisions made for prospective mothers could hardly be improved upon. Excellent also the nursing homes and kindergartens, which often boast superb personnels. An effort is being made, in the face of difficulties, to accustom the population to eating more animal fats, which in many respects correct the defects of unsound bread diets. It should also be noted that the needs of the factory worker have increased in many ways, in other words, that he is more conscious of the shortage in certain things than he was in days gone by. Clothing, for example, is playing an increasingly important part in his budget. And so are sweetmeats, and sugar products. Do these serve as substitutes for

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

other things? Apparently not: only goods of the best quality find a market. The poorer grades remain unsold.

Much is being done for the care of the sick. In this department comparisons with the West will soon be in order. Ivanovo boasts a magnificent tuberculosis clinic. The doctors, working their five hour day, are not allowed to treat more than five patients an hour. Hospitals taken over from the Old Régime are well equipped with nursing and medical supplies (there may be some shortage in instruments). New hospitals, splendidly, "lovingly," appointed, one might almost say, are being put up. I saw only one case of backsliding. There a factory infirmary had been turned into a club-house. I must pay tribute to the cleanliness and orderliness that prevailed in the hospitals even of remote villages; and not only in the hospitals, in the homes of workers. Opportunity was most readily granted me to see anything I wished—I was not taken to "parade specimens." The co-operative stores were as clean and neat as the eating places, the kindergartens, or the railroad trains—praiseworthy, these last, in this regard. In all such things one remarks a general determination, a collective exertion, to take a forward step toward "civilization."

Here great ambitions are confronted with the inertia of tradition, but at the same time with the very consequences of a head-strong and one-sided policy. One thing is clear: in many departments of life the worker, at least for the time being, is paying for the system for which he fought, which has been erected in his interest, but the results of which, also, are determining his lot. There can be no question that in view of the feverish haste with which the system is being built up, the present generation is defraying many costs by which only the generations to come will profit. This is becoming apparent, and increasingly so, as regards food, housing, and general comfort, in respect of which the present calamities are all consequences of socialization. A portion of the heavy burden was laid upon the peasant for the sake of the great goal. The peasant bore it most grudgingly, and folded his hands in his lap. Now the burden has automatically shifted, and is continuing more and more to shift, to the cities, and it is affecting the factory worker in many ways. But meantime, despite all

SOVIET RUSSIA

this, a new ideal of living for the working classes is being evolved—the ideal that they, in their State, shall become self-sufficient in everything. This self-sufficiency, as it is working out, is not yet able to raise the worker's standard of living; but he sees enough examples of favourable results from the effort to be of good courage. A youthful, mighty enthusiasm pervading all his class is sweeping him along, even when the beneficences showered upon him sometimes threaten to ruin him.

COMMUNIST POLICY IN INDUSTRY (Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, June, 1929.)

The "Rayon," so-called, of Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, located perhaps a hundred and fifty miles to the North-east of Moscow, is the textile centre of the Soviet Union (since Lodz now belongs to Poland). Cotton has been spun, woven, and printed for generations in this district, which formerly belonged to the governments of Vladimir and Yaroslav. The population, mostly made up of woodsmen, was very prolific. Cheap labour invited industry. The people were virtually turned over to the manufacturers who were often themselves of peasant origin. Down to the Revolution the textile "Settlement of Ivanovo," with a population of 85,203 souls, had no government of its own. The district was ruled by the manufacturers, the Imperial police, and the Governor living at Vladimir. Great factories developed long ago, and so also round about in the forest-covered government. In a technical sense organization was perfect. Careful attention was also paid to "culture" and "civilization," though not in the sense in which the present State of sovereign workers thinks of those things. There were hospitals, model dwellings, libraries, theatres. But they were "charities," and were often provided gratis for the communities. A great part of life was conducted in this patriarchal spirit. But everything was autocratic. Such the "lay-out" which the Communist Revolution took over. And the Revolution fell to with a will!

It was bound more or less to things as they were. Work had to be resumed, and then extended, as rapidly as possible. The peasants in the country and the masses in the cities were

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

crying aloud for textiles. They are still doing so. New plants had to be set up and co-ordinated with existing plants. The demand for expansion becoming urgent, large factories were established at different points in the city. Now they have broken loose from the city limits. At the present moment a colossal factory is going up some miles outside Ivanovo. It is known as the "Melange," and will cover the whole process of cotton manufacture according to the most up-to-date principles. It will be ready in 1931, and will employ 11,000 workers.

The love of Communism for centralization has manifested itself in everything so far. There is one huge warehouse to which all the cloth produced in Ivanovo-Vosnessensk is sent (surprising, there, the enormous amounts set apart for export). There is a central power plant built by the Krupps and using peat for fuel. Thirty *vershs* farther along, on the marshland, a much larger power plant is being built to serve the whole "Rayon of Ivanovo-Vosnessensk" (successor to the old governments). It is noteworthy that concentration in management seems to be nearing the saturation point. The largest trust, "The First State Textile Trust," is now using 39,932 looms, as compared with the 31,204 to be found before the War throughout the whole of this same area. It is manufacturing 646 million square metres against the old output of 472 millions. It is employing 91,254 hands as compared with 57,000. This Trust has forced itself into a leading position, in spite of the systematic opposition of Soviet economics, from the outset, to any sort of independence from the Centre in Moscow. In a distinctly second position stands the "Ivtrust," though it is running a hundred thousand spindles in brand-new plants. I quote these figures just to show the energy with which the work is being pushed.

I have visited all the factories which have been built during the past three years, and many of the old ones. Application to work, so far as I could see, was great, and neatness and orderliness faultless. I noted the same proletarian faces overcast with a sort of weariness—fruit of the everlasting return of the same uniformity, as everywhere else in the world! The interesting thing in this Socialistically inspired development is

Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, June, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

the status of the human being—not merely bald statistics of plant and production.

The management, as is a matter of principle with these new concerns, have their offices in the factory itself; and so have the paymaster, the accident-insurance manager, and the Factory Committee (which represents the Trade Union). This is regarded as a practical measure. To me it seemed a waste of valuable space. But the idea is, that this particular arrangement emphasizes the equality of the “responsible worker” with the other “workers!” The factory superintendent is, of course, a Communist, the “Red Director.” He is primarily responsible to the higher economic authorities for the successful management of the factory. But at the same time the factory is, or is supposed to be, a factory “of proletarians, for proletarians”; and the “Red Director” is, or is supposed to be, merely the “first worker.” He has, accordingly, a double, and, as it seems to me, an incoherent, task. He must, if possible, raise production in the factory to heights of efficiency unknown to capitalism. At the same time he must teach the workers that they are the real owners of the factory, that the factory is working for them and raising their standard of living and their working conditions to heights hitherto unprecedented under capitalism. He is their executive! The “Fabkom” supervises his activities in this respect, just as the Supreme Economic Council, through its appropriate organs, supervises him in his technical activity. But, corresponding to the general theory, the workers, too, have rights of auditing, and even of initiative.

On how many complicated relationships the success of a “Red Director” depends is obvious enough; and, in fact, the filling of such positions is one of the most perplexing questions of personnel with which the Soviet Union has to deal. These high functionaries dress and live, in general, very much as the workers do. Their salaries amount to about double of the maximum wage—the temptation to “go bourgeois” is, therefore, not very strong! Almost always the “Red Directors” have previously been working men themselves. The reduction of operating costs to a self-supporting basis for the factory—this constant and ever-

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

pressing demand of the State as producer—is in itself a hard nut to crack for men without managerial experience; but here it is crossed and complicated by the “victory claims” of the revolutionary worker for much better conditions of living and a far-reaching amelioration of the hardships of toil! Only long experience with life, supplemented with great native shrewdness and strength of character, and with political convictions of a definite colour can enable a “Red Director” to find a common denominator for all these pressures. The workers speak not only through their special “Fabkom.” The Trades’ Unions in general are also very powerful. All the way up through the Party, and all the way up through the Soviet “Machine,” a thread of Trades’ Union influence runs, till it reaches the very apices of power, supporting the interests of the worker, as against the interests of the work he does, all the way along.

The surplus of the “First Trust” amounted to 34 millions last year. The Trade Union insisted, and with success, that whatever the seriousness of the financial crisis in the State, something more than a bonus of 10 or 15 per cent. that had been contemplated, should come back to the factory for the benefit of the workers.

But then again, in the “Zinoviev Factory” I noticed a room where the machines had been set dangerously close together—a violation of the specifications for workers’ protection, of which much is being made nowadays in the Soviet Union. “No changes are possible,” I was told. “A matter of sheer necessity!” A special exception, evidently; but the case illustrates a friction, with which the “Red Director” must have constantly to deal, between two different objectives, both to be pursued at one and the same time. And in the last analysis, as it seemed to me, the stress is laid on the interests of the work, even though under restrictions and compromises of which a Western manufacturer would hardly be able to conceive. That is the surprising thing.

PART III

MEN AND PRINCIPLES IN THE STRUGGLE
FOR POWER

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

A SPEECH BY LENIN
(Moscow, December 25th, 1922.)

Lenin's friends refer to him as "the old man." The expression suggests the good nature that pervades his more intimate relations with people. But I have just been watching the Lenin who talked down from the fore-stage of the great Moscow Theatre upon the assembled delegates from the Soviets of All-Russia, submitting his accounting on his régime for the year 1921. One thing was apparent: he possessed the utter confidence and respect of the gathering; but popularity, as the term is commonly understood, that cheap familiarity which the "good fellow" enjoys with crowds, he did not have; nor did he seem to care to have it. He "made it warm" for his hearers, if I may so say, but he did not warm them.

The audience was made up of some 1,800 delegates. Judging by faces only, I could not discover a single out-and-out "intellectual" among them. One could not have imagined a crowd more exclusively "people." Yet Lenin made not an effort to come down to its level. He talked "high-brow"—the cultivated language of a trained thinker with a gift for clear expression and precise diction, and a certain flair for rhetorical effects. One would have thought such a style an insurmountable barrier between him and that audience; yet, if barrier there were, it lay in the awe that he inspired in all present, a feeling that before them stood the "first man in Russia," the natural centre of the new State! In point of fact the meeting belonged absolutely to him, a man different from his listeners, fundamentally different, in the education he had received, and in the life he had lived.

My seat was quite close to the stage. I could hear his every word. I confess it was a definite disappointment to realize
Moscow, December 25th, 1922

SOVIET RUSSIA

that I could not make out just what the compelling power emanating from such an historic figure might be. Before me I could see a lean well-knit figure of proletarian cast, with an almost wild countenance sunken, as it were, into his head. What struck me especially was the outlines of his skull, a skull that seemed to have more "bumps," more, and more improbable, depressions and protuberances than I believe I have ever observed in any other human being. His clothes were shoddy and unpressed. He wore a soft collar. When he appeared, he was greeted with an ovation. As was the case last year, the applause was artificially prolonged by a shout deftly interjected at the proper moment. He, however, seemed to pay no attention. He did not lift his eyes. He made no bow of thanks. He stood scowling at a manuscript he held in his hands—scraps of paper of different shapes and sizes, which he was fumbling awkwardly about, in a vain effort to set them in order.

From his first sentence I could sense the practised speaker, who, however, warms to his task but slowly. He must have delivered as many as a hundred words before he lifted his eyes for a first glance at the audience before him. He had not, however, been reading—the scraps of paper contained statistics and memoranda. But gradually he gained momentum. His voice did not seem to be any the fuller, but it carried farther. Its range of tone was not so great, but one fell more and more under the impression of what a powerful voice it was. The words poured out from between two thin lips that were drawn up into a curious triangle whenever the speaker smiled.

The effects depended upon striking expressions that hit the mark, on irony, sarcasm, scorn, ruthlessness utter and absolute. There were no undertones of feeling, no pathos, no playing upon hopes or sympathies. There was no effort, even, to persuade. One sensed a hard inflexible will that filled every atom of the man. He told where he stood, and where others stood; and those others were then tossed aside with harsh thrusts of scorn, by deadly shafts barbed with wit. Lenin's arguments all lead up to witty climaxes carefully prepared, so well prepared that the crucial word can be uttered in a low

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

voice, almost in a whisper. Lenin somehow obtains his strongest effects by just this lowering of his voice. His crescendoes all lead down the scale. There are times, it is true, when he fails to make his point, when only one or two individuals in the audience will laugh. At such times one remembers that Lenin is a very lonely person, a brain-worker who is never sparing of himself, and who forces himself on his audience with sheer force of will.

THE NEP.

(Moscow, December 25th, 1922.)

What he had to say to that audience was not specially pleasant, nor was it made to appear so: it was something unavoidably unpleasant, and tedious, but it went with an inflexible abandoned will. Everyone in the theatre was aware of the combination, and it seemed just as capable of fascinating and holding a crowd as flattery might have been.

"In the present circumstances we can help the peasants only through trade—trade and trade only. We are obliged to enter upon this path. We do so in the greatest good faith. It will be for a long time. It will not be for always. The cause of our doing so is our inability to restore our big industries, which have been ruined by the Imperialistic War followed by the Civil Wars; and our consequent inability to provide the relief which agriculture needs." No stop-gaps, no blind experimenting! Consistent efforts, rather, to bring big industry to its former peak! "And this is a matter not of two years, nor of three years. It will require ten and perhaps fifteen."

The speaker does not shrink, he does not spare: "We have made mistakes. We have been disappointed in our progress with transportation, so that taxes in kind have not been effective." The government had suffered "abominable defeats" in the matter of fuel, because of mistaken estimates as to the probable needs of the first half-year. These, however, had been corrected for the second half-year. So long as there was no improvement in fuel and transportation, there could be no improvement in general economic conditions—continued decline rather.

At this point Lenin began to sound his "message." A
Moscow, December 25th, 1922

SOVIET RUSSIA

change had come over Russia since the beginning of the year! The era of war-preparations and revolutionary action had passed. The time for serious work had come. Most alarming the situation in the metal industries, which showed six per cent. of their pre-war efficiency! Only the production of peat had improved over pre-War figures. Germany would furnish twenty machines, during the year 1922, for a large scale production of peat according to modern methods.

An announcement was then made, dryly, with a comic effect for the audience: "Our making friends with that country has accordingly begun. Germany thereby takes the lead in Europe."

Then a general summing up: The New Economic Policy, the new economics! First of all the assurance that people who were intending to run their business in expectation of 100 per cent. profits would be differently treated than in the bourgeois countries! In this connection a word of explanation as to reforms in the *Tcheka*. "The *Tcheka*," said Lenin, "had been the terror of speculators throughout the country, and indeed the terror of the whole bourgeois world. But that had been necessary to offset the machinations of the world bourgeoisie against Russia, and to thwart the Russian bourgeoisie itself, which was again pressing forward in all spheres of Russian life. Henceforward, however, the *Tcheka* would confine its activity to the strictly political field." (It will be interesting to see whether this reform carried through.)

And then to the main attack: "We have got to learn this New Economic Policy. We have all of us sinned in the past by refusing to learn anything." The Revolution was an event of significance for the whole history of mankind. The Civil Wars that followed were also great achievements. But to accomplish such things enthusiasm had been enough. They did not demand any very serious examination of conscience! Economic problems on the other hand could not be solved with enthusiasm alone. There was, he continued, a Russian parable (not a very pretty story for just that audience!): A flock of geese foreswore obedience to their owner on the ground that their ancestors had saved the Capitol in Rome. The farmer replied: "Well, what have you done?" The Communists of the Revolution had to think of themselves

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

as their own ancestors ! They had each to decide whether they backed the declaration of the geese or the answer of the farmer. "Trade unionists of Russia, you may protest a hundred times that you are Communists. But I ask you : how about raw materials ? Without raw materials there can be no industry, no big industry. Without big industry there can be no proletariat. We are talking and writing to-day of the 'proletarian movement,' and the proletariat is vanishing before our eyes with the collapse of big industry. There are too many people among us who enjoy throwing dust in their own eyes. That is why we in Russia have fallen into a poverty I could never in my life have believed possible!" Against everlasting disorganization, organization, and work, work, work ! "People talk blithely of our having taken over twenty plants ; but they say nothing about our managing even one on a paying basis." "The Temple of War, the Revolution, is not the Temple of Production." And, thereupon, a hard, sharply worded, uncompromising declaration of war on the atmosphere of the Revolution, against everything sentimental and poetical, a spirit useful enough when the victory had to be won, but which now had to be replaced with the directly opposite qualities of foresight, careful planning, sparingness of words, a facing of realities. "The new policy is irrevocable !"

Lenin in very truth was grazing the limits of a challenge to that audience of Communists who had hitherto been drawing their inspiration from quite different sources. As matters stood, they all had much to learn from the "hundred per cent. profiteer." The bulwarks of the Régime were under direct attack : the Trades' Unions must answer not by playing politics but by learning something they had not yet learned : ways and means of intensifying production !

This challenge too was hurled with cutting sharpness. Yet it was not taken as a rebuke, exactly. The audience understood that Lenin was talking not so much to them as with them, discussing matters of common interest, and of an importance as weighty to them as to him. With great cleverness Lenin made that point clear from beginning to end in his speech. The scolding did not hurt ! The most dangerous
Moscow, December 25th, 1922

SOVIET RUSSIA

part of the lecture was also the most important : the part that dealt with the New Economic Policy. From the criticism, there, no one could escape. The Soviet State had made many mistakes, been guilty of countless sins. After founding the sovereign Proletariat, it should now take its seat in primary school again ! But here the tension was eased by Lenin's tone of quiet mirth—just a suggestion that he was laughing at himself ! The faces of his hearers wore much the same expression of sheepishness that one sees in a theatre when some respectable citizen is suddenly caught in moral wrongdoing—a well-known device of comedy. They too had been caught in wrongdoing, and were being properly scolded ! But there was no bitterness, no ill-feeling.

Of course, one might ask : how long do the effects of a good moral lecture last, after the curtain has fallen ? At any rate, Lenin's effort to catch the ear of the masses and rouse them to a declaration of war along the whole front was wholly successful. The rest has to be left to tenacious detail work radiating from Moscow. At earlier congresses held after the proclamation of the NEP (1921), a demand was made on political grounds for reversals and renunciations of the practices of War Communism. Now the moment had come for a psychological right-about which would reinstate healthy commonsense after a romantic prancing after ideals over hill and dale.

LENIN'S DEATH

(Moscow, February 9th, 1924.)

The street-car line that traverses the Red Square along the walls of the Kremlin has been discontinued. Straight across the track sits the great cube of wood within which Lenin's bier is sheltered. The dark, reddish, block-like structure is flanked by two sheds, the one a guard-house, with telephones and other accommodations ; the other, brilliantly lighted at night, covering a stairway that leads into the crypt and to the bier, the latter protected by a thick plate-glass window. It is very hard to approach the tomb. It is roped off at a great distance, and the ropes are reinforced by lines of cavalry which are constantly circling the square at a trot. It is all in

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

the spirit of Lenin himself: something utterly unpoetical, utterly sober, bitterly unsentimental!

The tomb helps to sustain and continue the pomp of the funeral. Many people in Moscow, to-day, think back to that moment in sheer astonishment at themselves. It was an unparalleled outburst of feeling, and it expressed itself with surprising unanimity. The All-Russian Soviet Congress had just assembled in the Moscow Theatre. Kalinin appeared on the stage, his eyes streaming. At his first words, a woman in the gallery screamed, and thereupon great waves of anguish and despair seemed to sweep backward and forward through the auditorium. Otherwise cold and dispassionate observers described the scene to me with faltering voices. When the hysteria seemed to be getting out of hand, Yenukidze, secretary of the "Zik" (the "Central Executive Committee"), stepped forward and begged for calm. His words helped. But overt manifestations of private sorrow continued down to the end of the funeral ceremonies.

There are large numbers of people in Moscow who look askance at the Soviet Régime, indeed must do so. In the intolerable cold of those days, those same people stood about the streets for hours at a time, waiting. Life in Russia has been dull enough for everybody; but curiosity, and love of a spectacle, do not explain such manifestations. The doctors and other clever people speak of "mass-psychosis." But the scenes which Moscow has been witnessing during these past days have expressed a deep-lying sense of oneness and comradeship in all classes of the Russian nation. Special quarters had to be arranged for the care of hysterical mourners, and among them were not a few soldiers, mere boys. But what does such a detail signify in comparison with more important facts? Eight or nine hundred thousand people either walked in line past the bier, or followed it in the funeral procession! This gigantic ceremony has been a demonstration of the unimpaired youthfulness, spontaneity, sentimentality, of an unspoiled nation.

Such, for me, the essence of this moving episode! Other aspects, of course, are almost equally interesting—politics, for example, and others more difficult to classify. The talent of the Soviet government for leading the masses has never

Moscow, February 9th, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

been denied by anyone; and this time, too, everything went splendidly, from the set speeches, all the way down to the words of Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, who made the best speech of all. What better stroke than the selection of Lenin's temporary burial place? It not only does not remove Lenin from the city. It compels every living soul to be conscious of his presence there: his "mortal coil" blocks a street-car line! It was all excellently planned and successfully executed—everyone is agreed on that!

But what may be the inner significance of all this festivity of mourning? No one can mistake the presence of a mystical tendency in the many ceremonies. In the naïve sorrow, the submissive worship, paid by the masses to the person of Vladimir Ilyitch, the foundations are evidently being laid (as usual from above down) for an eventual apotheosis. Bukharin, a man of years, to be sure, and a scholar, made open allusion, in his obituary, to Lenin's "mortal coil," and to an influence of the dead hero "far beyond the pale of his earthly existence." Everywhere there was a temptation to graze those boundaries where immortality of memory and achievement turns into the old-fashioned immortality of the soul. The Soviet government abhors Plato. It mistrusts higher mathematics on grounds of Communist philosophy. It fears lest Einstein's teaching be counter-revolutionary in tendency. Yet it has played with mystical fires even more dangerous in these ceremonies. It may have been that Lenin's primitive Russianism struck hidden springs of national sentiment. There can be no doubt that in his death his personality, of such heroic stature, drew many a soul from scepticism and desperate sorrow to devout worship of him. What can we think of the fact that the Academy of Fine Arts has received a commission to fashion an "harmonious symbol" of Lenin's "mortal coil"? An ikon, no less! For it was noticed that peasants came twenty, thirty, fifty miles to the capital, on foot, in order to walk past his bier, crossing themselves. One gets the same impression from the great number of regulations that have been issued touching observances in honour of Lenin. The militia was sent from house to house, requesting that as many as possible show the red flag. Dancing and jazz have been forbidden for a month.

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

Petrograd has become Leningrad, the Ruminantsov Museum the Lenin Museum—I choose my examples at random. Lenin's death was perhaps the first occasion since the advent of the Communists when their artful, and often artificial, Régime felt itself wholly at one with the rest of the nation. But it is not satisfied with that. In this feverishly sustained effort to keep the man, Lenin, aloof from everything suggesting the commonplace existence of a human being, the Soviet Régime evinced in the usual measure its great inner activity, its onward drive, its boundless and clear-sighted thirst for power, and the usual correct mixture of spontaneity and calculation. The government is aware not only of what Lenin means to the peasants, but also of what he may mean. As was the case five years ago, the people lets itself be carried along, even though private individuals may amuse themselves with the usual laughs, the usual stories that are told at the expense of the mighty. One such is going the rounds at present. When Lenin got to Heaven, it says, he was not admitted, since he had already made a paradise for himself on earth. Whereupon he turned to the other place; but the Devil said to him: "I am short of rooms here—go back to your own Hell!"

SUCCESSION AND DÉTENTE (Moscow, March, 1924.)

The appointment of Rykov to the chairmanship of the Council of People's Commissaries in Lenin's place was put through yesterday, giving a diplomatic solution to the impossible problem of finding a successor for Lenin. The constitution of the Russian State has not been "cut to fit one man," as was said of Bismarck's Germany. The office of chairman in the Council of Commissaries does not in itself confer on the incumbent any such extraordinary powers as Lenin possessed in virtue of one of the most remarkable personalities of our time.

Alexei Ivanovitch Rykov is worthy of filling this position, too important in the structure of the Soviet State to be left vacant. He comes of old Russian stock. His father was a merchant at Saratov, but born of peasant parents. Rykov
Moscow, March, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

himself had the typical career of the Russian *intelligentsia*. He went to a university, developed into a revolutionist and Bolshevik, and thereafter remained in close sympathy with Lenin whose footsteps he followed all along through the period of exile down to the seizure of power at the Kremlin. At the age of forty-two he found himself in the inner circle of the powers so suddenly placed in control of Russian political life—the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which, in turn, has found its extreme concentration in the triumvirate of Stalin, Kamenev, and Zinoviev. A struggle between these three for the succession to Lenin was avoided only in deference to considerations of policy and of fact. That the choice should have fallen on a compromise candidate such as Rykov, a man of some popularity even outside the Party, bears new witness to the competence and statesmanship of the Soviet government.

For two months past the Party had been fighting a most spirited internal battle. Not so much the resolutions of the Soviet Congress as the death of Lenin put an end to the quarrelling. The passing of the Dictator stirred the Party to its bottommost depths, cutting into it deeply enough to change its shape and form. One hundred and twenty thousand new members have been admitted, and they must now be assimilated into the Party organization. The battle, as I say, was hushed. For that matter, the men at the seat of power, who had all along been shouldering the ultimate and highest responsibilities, were exhausted. For eight weeks they had not had a night of sound sleep. On some nights they had not gone to bed at all. Here now was an opportunity for a little rest! Friends and enemies “paired off” for vacations. Pair by pair they went “to the village.”

Indeed, how politically minded these Russians are! What occasion is not exploited in political terms? These men all turned to the peasants to recuperate! The peasant is the last and most precious prize to be garnered from the Communist victory!

WHAT BECOMES OF TROTSKI?
(Moscow, March, 1924.)

Trotsky was sick in bed (by no means the only one sick in

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

bed) during the month of January. He was suffering from tuberculosis of the pectoral glands. That, at least, is the story. He had a high fever. Though he was living not far from Moscow, he was unable, or unwilling, to accompany to the capital a group of emissaries who came to invite him to the Party Committee meeting (perhaps to summon him before it). The struggle which began last October was then about over. Trotsky was bitterly aware of the wall which the mighty in the Party "Machine" had reared across his path.

He went, instead, down into the Caucasus, that great, that wonderful, sanatorium of Russia. The news of Lenin's death reached him at Tiflis. He sent his condolences, a pithy, masterly telegram that read like an army order. He did not return for the funeral—he proceeded to Sukhum, a beautiful health resort on the shores of the Black Sea. The inhabitants of the region, as well as officials in the neighbouring towns, called on him to extend their greetings, with the usual gifts of bread and salt. He declined all offers of hospitality. He was still seriously ill. But that was not the whole truth: he was bitter, self-conscious in the presence of people, hurt!

Then his spirits seemed to revive. He began, or continued, work on a book that was to deal with the economic problems of present-day Russia (publication is announced for the end of April). His physical health improved. It seemed only a matter of weeks when he would be able to leave Sukhum for Moscow. News of him kept reaching the capital. He seemed to have discovered that the sun was shining, to be awakening from the oppression, so much like slavery, that power lays upon the man who wields it. Just a vacation at a seaside resort! But one wonders! When he went from Moscow to Sukhum did he take none of his political importance with him? Had he shed completely the many difficult problems touching the future of the Party and of the Soviet Régime which centre about his person? History does not go on vacations to seaside resorts!

From the very beginning, the friction of these last months between the "Opposition," the "Machine," and the latter's drivers, was more a question of personalities than anything else, though probably no one on either side would admit as
Moscow, March, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

much. There is no doubt that Trotsky, in his many-sided criticism of the Party's leadership, was striving to extend the scope of his own activities. He advocated quicker "socialization," extension of the bases for creating an eager proletariat: industrialization, even at the expense of the peasant. He thought power was being over-centralized, that the "Machine," with its innumerable officials, was becoming an artificial, a dead, thing! He wanted "more air," more initiative, more "youth," an "organization of the living forces of the country," the refreshing influence of new ideas! On this basis he had become the leader of an "Opposition" in itself made up of many different tendencies. The only result was the injection into the Party's dissensions of the claims of his own strong individuality, so hungry for action, so teeming with ideas. He was setting up his own temperament against the Party and the Party's traditions!

Some of the Party's prestige evidently lay in his hands. He was "the man of the Red Army," the man who had built it up out of undisciplined crowds of war-weary soldiers during dark days, and led it against the enemy. But in all this activity he had by no means shot his bow; and he could truly say that he had always brought more power to the Party through the Army than the Party had ever given him by entrusting the Army to him. Nevertheless, the "Machine" had been pushing him aside, "cramping his style," ever since the Kronstadt Mutiny. What was happening to him he feared would soon be happening to the Party! Even though the quarrels within the Party were silenced, Trotsky was still there with his own personality, his unquenchable need to be active, and on a large scale! The resolutions of the Congress had at least adjourned further debates for some months. Lenin's death seemed to have disposed of them for good. But the great question was still unanswered: what to do with Trotsky?

A delegation was sent down to Sukhum. The only certain item that publicly transpired was the fact that "Piatakov had visited" the sick Achilles in his tent. Piatakov is an "Old Revolutionary" (in spite of his youth). He comes of a wealthy bourgeois family. He is a versatile person and was greatly

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

beloved of Lenin, who sent him, along with Mme. Kolontai, to St. Petersburg in 1917, before setting out on his own journey in the famous sealed train. Piatakov's visit to Trotsky was the best indication that personal relations between Trotsky and the "Machine" were still being maintained.

What actually happened has always been kept a secret—relatively. The little that leaked out at Moscow was a mere suggestion of what then took place and is still going on.

Trotsky wanted a sphere of action in the economic field. Now Dzerzhinski, who had been leader of the "Angels of the Revolution," the *Tcheka*, since 1917, had just taken over the chairmanship of the Supreme Economic Council—Dzerzhinski is a man who enjoys the full confidence of the "Machine." Trotsky already had a seat in the "Sto" (the Council of Labour and Defence). If the functions of the "Sto" were widened and strengthened, made more readily manageable by one person, Trotsky thought he might find in it a field for his abilities as an organizer, and an outlet for his boundless energies. With the "Sto" in his hands he would soon show that the economic rehabilitation of the Soviets could be realized "thirty per cent. more quickly" than seemed at the time possible!

But Trotsky was disappointed in this. The "Machine" retorted that he had "shown very little co-operation" with the "Sto" as it had been all along. How much improvement might be expected if he concentrated all his energies there?

Now what the "Machine" fears is precisely Trotsky's overbearing energy. The other leaders do not think the country strong enough, as yet, to withstand a vigorous treatment which would substitute for a gradual climb up the stairs to prosperity drastic measures applied in a more or less military spirit. The painfully reared structure of the Party, the delicate economic balance of the country at large, might be upset. "Until the World Revolution comes," this new Russia "must go slowly," this very special Soviet Russia, which possesses no measure for estimating her possibilities other than the results of the experiments, often costly enough, which she makes herself, always realizing that she herself is not only a State but also an experiment! In such a State the

Moscow, March, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

untested idea finds application readily enough! Should one forever be exposing it to the unforeseeable disturbances which every new policy involves? Should one, in fine, pass such a Russia over to a man like Trotsky, a man who thinks too quickly, acts too wilfully, and, in spite of undoubted capacity for wielding power, is after all only an "intellectual"?

Trotsky's plan for the "Sto" went aground on the inflexible cageyness of those members of the Party Committee who believe in orderly methods. They were too moderate in temper to trust him. They were too well aware of the thousands of difficulties and limitations which beset the Party in its daily exercise of power. They have too definite a notion of just how much hurry and enthusiasm may be expected of the Soviet State, so laboriously stabilized and still perilously on edge!

One positive result, however, emerged from Piatakov's visit to Sukhum—to bring it to pass may have been the real purpose of his mission. I call it positive—its significance is really negative. The War Council (one of the several "Colleges" that are attached to the offices of the various Commissars) is being enlarged. This narrows the power of the People's War Commissar, Trotsky! Some time ago a man from the "Politburo," who belonged to the inner clique of the "Machine," was appointed to this Council, replacing a Party member who had sided with Trotsky a little too warmly. Now Trotsky has accepted a further "strengthening" of the College: day before yesterday, Skianski, who had been substituting on the board for six weeks during Trotsky's illness, was relieved of his post and replaced with a reliable "Machine" man, Frunse.

For the time being, at least, the ring around Trotsky has been drawn tighter! Of all the various schemes and plans which he has been nursing to gain elbowroom for his capacities, nothing has come save less elbowroom than before! Will he regard the bright sunshine in the Caucasus as an adequate compensation?

TRIBULATIONS OF A NEP-COMMUNIST: KRASNATCHOKOV GOES TO JAIL

(Moscow, April, 1924.)

Some days ago, Mr. Krasnatchokov was sentenced to six

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

years in solitary confinement. At the time of his arrest there was some talk of a death sentence; but, as a matter of fact, Krasnatchokov's crimes did not extend beyond a few personal self-indulgences in the business management of "his" bank. He had made loans at a rather low rate of interest to a construction company in which his brother was interested. While sitting on the Supreme Economic Council, he had drawn up a rather liberal contract with a Russo-American concern, with which he was personally connected, and from which his wife drew monthly assignments payable in the United States.

Krasnatchokov was further guilty of misdemeanours, unbecoming in a Communist. He had made improper use of his income. His secretary, a presumably pretty girl, was known to have travelled with him through the Caucasus on a special train. It developed that at St. Petersburg, one night, he had thrown handfuls of money at a ballet of Gipsy dancers—a well-known extravagance of the Grand-dukes, aristocrats, and "profiteers" of former days. In a word, the spectacle that Krasnatchokov had been furnishing was little short of a public scandal!

The strange thing about the case was that Krasnatchokov was an "Old-Revolutionary." He was banished to Siberia while a mere boy. Eventually he escaped to the United States, rose in the world, and became a successful lawyer in Chicago. Returning to Russia after the Revolution, he became President of the Far-Eastern Republic, the intermediary stage in Siberia between the expulsion of the "Whites" and the restoration of Russian dominion. His last step was to enter business under the New Economic Policy, as president of the "Prombank." The bank made great strides under his management.

His fall came in the autumn of 1923. He had made a mistake. He may find some slight consolation in one thing: all Europe made the same mistake!

He seems to have believed that the Soviet State neither intended nor would be able, to hold "the commanding heights" in Russian economic life. He had no very firm confidence in the long duration of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and its peculiar conception of property; nor

Moscow, April, 1924 K 129

SOVIET RUSSIA

in the indelibility of that chalk line which the Communist programme had drawn between the Russian dictatorship and the bourgeois world. One cannot say whether he actually turned heretic to the Régime, and thought of the line in question as a sort of side-line on a tennis court that is soon worn away as play proceeds! He may even have backslided, at the promptings of his jovial Russian nature, at memories of a pleasant life in the bourgeois world, or of his days of independence in America. He may have come to think of himself as a free banker—the smooth-mannered, successful, very popular banker that, in fact, he was!

In either event, he acted very much the way Europe (once Europe had heard of Lenin's NEP) expected that men of his kind would act. With bourgeois business methods again recognized, he, consciously or unconsciously, "went bourgeois." He began to look upon his bank and his high position in finance as moral values of his own, as affairs of his own. And so with his private life! All the non-Russian world had thought that such transformations would be a matter of course, when the Régime in Russia changed front and turned toward the NEP.

It was of little avail to warn interested Westerners against such comfortable, but such incredibly obtuse, judgments, which seemed to fit well enough into a general scheme of money-making. Many people nourished a childish belief in the omnipotence of "economic forces" and lazily imagined that "economic forces" alone would determine the development of Soviet history.

Like the high-treason cases in Germany and the oil-scandals in the United States, the Nep-case against Krasnatchokov simply had to come in Russia, as a tragic criticism on the farce of the bourgeois-Communist, which Molière, if he were living in Russia to-day, would be so amused to write.

WHAT THE NEP IS NOT
(Moscow, April, 1924.)

The State not only lays a heavy hand on those things in the economic field of which it disapproves. It goes merrily on from there. Independent wholesalers are playing too

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

important a rôle! There are too many middlemen! There are too many small shops! Many of the firms that are doing a mixed business are unnecessary! The "bourgeois evil" is to be tolerated only so far as is necessary! When the swelling gets too serious, one uses the knife!

In the Russian heaven there is just one star, the Soviet's star. The Party is steering for it by the shortest route discoverable.

The government declares, it is true, that it intends to establish and extend its economic power under free competition, combining its economic activity with currency reform, and directing it against free trading. It should be noted, however, that heavy price cutting on raw materials and manufactured goods resulting in losses to State enterprises is balanced by subsidies. And this device is supplemented by restrictions on credits to independent merchants at the banks controlled by the State. A far-reaching favouritism is being shown State enterprises in their quarrels with private capital.

The State takes over the deficits of the "co-operatives," which are being strengthened in every way possible. They are sooner or later to replace all private stores, even the small shops, which are now being threatened with a boycott by factory workers. In business, as in government, accordingly, the prevailing idea is vigorously to force an extension of the Communist spirit and of Communist influence. It often seems as though the bourgeois elements in the bureaucracies and in non-governmental spheres were being allowed to work and produce only that the Communist State may have something to seize.

The State calls itself "revolutionary"—"realistically revolutionary," as Radek neatly puts it. That is not mere talk, to-day. To judge by these past years, these past months, this State, so long as it endures, will maintain its peculiar tension, its peculiar outlook, by a fluctuating, intermittent war on everything bourgeois and everything capitalistic, these being considered evil *par excellence*. It will either be revolutionary or else not be at all! Not to recognize as the fundamental thing in this State this inflexible combativeness, substantially unchanging, however various its forms and manifestations

SOVIET RUSSIA

may be, is to go disastrously wrong. Even if, as people in Europe often point out triumphantly, Soviet Russia may not be actually Communistic, it is nevertheless definitely anti-capitalistic. Its determination to be so reigns with absolute sway, even if the State cannot altogether dispense with the individual enterprise and the private initiative which its censorship is fighting even in art and in science. We need not here discuss the danger that this resolve, by its very resoluteness, may be destroying more life and greater values than it is creating. The pertinent point is that to-day in Russia it holds the power!

A Communist said to me: "Krasnatchokov would have received six months, at the most, if he had not been a Communist." Not only are the war on the NEP and the check on the foreign concessions policy characteristic of this orthodox reaction. Just as characteristic is the Party's manner of dealing with itself; and this, in fact, is the best evidence for my contention. For months past no more "intellectuals" have been taken into the Party. The host of independent thinkers who spent decades in developing the spirit and the ideas of the Revolution now seem objects of suspicion. It was not so much what Krasnatchokov did, as what he was—the temperament, the character of the man—that roused the Party's ire. But many other kinds of people are just as distasteful to the Régime as he.

Two hundred thousand workers have come to swell the Party's ranks; but this expansion is being paralleled with the third—or is it the fourth?—"Party house-cleaning." Heads are being searched in their most secret recesses for traces of heresy. To have had bourgeois ancestry or bourgeois employment is to invite suspicion. To have bourgeois relatives is almost fatal. The "Liberalizing Opposition" is now being confronted with what it did and said last year—a most unpleasant surprise! Who would ever have thought it possible? Anyone who came over as a convert from the bourgeois camp is now in danger. Puritanical strictures on private life aim at discouraging "bourgeois ways." Party members are being reprimanded for taking advantage of the tolerant laws of the Soviets to indulge in too many divorces. The magazines of the Young Communists, young people bubbling with hopes

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

and enthusiasms, are deemed too independent. An official censorship is keeping watch on morals. Even in the Party there is very little sound slumber these days! The ruling clique is itself conscious of the extraordinary tension (many find it almost unendurable), this oppressive uncertainty as to just how tight the screws will be turned.

And where does this steady relentless pressure of reaction originate? It is something almost weirdly anonymous! Nothing is more obscure than the source of all these regulations which bear all the same stamp. Are the younger revolutionaries more radical than the "Old"? This anonymous dictator—is it perchance the "collective will"? Its ritual is certainly being observed!

Krasnatchokov, and Europe with him, conceived of the NEP as a gently flowing brook that would gradually widen into a broad stream. The Bolsheviks, however, would have it a fairly small frog pond. They would do away with it altogether, rather than see it overflow its banks. For them it is not a pretty thing, either! It is just a place to get water, when the posies need sprinkling! Poor Krasnatchokov might have taken warning from a development conspicuous enough in the judicial procedure of Soviet Russia. Sharper and sharper distinctions are being drawn between "old bourgeois," "new bourgeois," and proletarians. These last are conceded mitigations and extenuations in advance. To save them from contamination, they are not even to be jailed along with bourgeois criminals. Krasnatchokov, of course, encountered the worst side of this new Justice who functions with two kinds of scales. His whole deportment was out of key. It shocked a restless and uneasy "revolutionary consciousness," "the fountain head of all justice"!

While the NEP was developing by leaps and bounds, Europe should have noticed (with some misgiving) that the extirpation of everything bourgeois was proceeding according to plan along the road toward the destruction of bourgeois culture. Exclusion from schools of young men possibly infected by previous bourgeois education continued. They were being dismissed even from the higher classes of the Universities after regular promotions. Bourgeois children

SOVIET RUSSIA

were being barred from the schools—these were, in fact, already over-full—while children of workers and peasants were being rapidly promoted, in the belief that they would enter the newly created world unencumbered and unimpaired by ideas from the past. Brains, in Russia, are henceforth to be chained to hands! "Working men's schools" cram for the universities in four years of preparation. Only those students are accepted who can show lives of manual labour behind them. Diplomas are awarded on the basis of "Communist maturity." Nowadays even sympathetic bourgeois specialists remark: "We have ten, perhaps fifteen, years more ahead of us! Then the new crop of Reds will be ready!" And so it is! If possible, bourgeois culture must die with the present generation. Increasing intellectual pauperism is a fact in Russia. The Party admits it, but thinks that it can, since it must, put up with it, just as it has put up with economic pauperism. It is reconciled to traversing the pass, no matter how strait and how dangerous, so only the Promised Land be found green and flowering at the far end.

The experience is a common one; the more one sees and knows, the less willing one is to pass judgment. The Communists point to the amorality that prevails in the international relations of the countries in Europe, a widespread disposition to validate the "right of the stronger." They note how threadbare and outworn are the conceptions of life which, in their opinion, are determining the decline and fall of Europe. They think of themselves as heralds of a new gospel; and they therefore ridicule Europe's pretention to sit in judgment upon them.

My intention here has been simply to describe in its broad lines the trend of feeling in Soviet Russia as it has revealed itself, contrary to all predictions, during recent months. My point is that an optimism which indulges in pleasant generalities about Russia is not enough. Far more important is it to realize in what a limited sense only one may speak of a revival of the bourgeois spirit in this very peculiar State; and to what extent the political ideals and the political exigencies of the Party override, and will continue to override, considerations of economic utility. The capitalistic thought of Europe regards

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

economic utility as the force that will automatically triumph in all cases. Now not only in the case of Russia has Europe erred in this respect!

Yet the economic future of Russia is not desperate, on that account, as things stand to-day; nor is the future of Europe in Russia, if people work in view of the facts that actually prevail. At present, of course, the violent stretching of the Communistic bow is beginning to affect foreign relations in an unfavourable sense, and is threatening the permanence and smooth working of the relations already so laboriously achieved.

THE PARTY AND THE NEP (Moscow, June, 1924.)

At the June convention, Kamenev found a clever formula to express the State's economic policy in a nutshell: "Replacement of private capital without displacement in volume of business!" The first half of his programme has been pushed for eight months past in every conceivable way. Now circumstances are forcing the second half into the foreground. It has been evident that the progressive immobilization of capital is disastrous to revenues from taxation. Now another pressing question arises as to whether private turnover is not diminishing faster than the State, with its present resources, can replace it.

For the time being this is certainly the case. The State is not in a position to force its programme through even on a limited scale. With the outspokenness which the Soviet government always manifests in such cases, Zinoviev declares that prices in the rural co-operative stores, so tenderly fostered by the State, are often 40 per cent. higher than those in private stores. Must State business always involve bureaucracy? It would seem so. Even in making individual purchases the unprejudiced shopper soon remarks whether he is in a State store or is dealing with a merchant. The manners of the clerk, the variety of choice offered, the prices—everything is different.

The government, meantime, is nourishing no illusions. It declared war on the NEP, because private capital seemed to be regaining power even in the political field. It is aware that

SOVIET RUSSIA

State stores and their auxiliary co-operatives can for the present be only raw materials for the eventual organization of rapid turnover. At this convention of the Party, however vigorously the resolve was expressed to replace the socialization of business above everything else in State policy, just as positively did the speakers realize how far away the goal is at present, how indispensable the NEP remains. Even the most vociferous prophets—and Russia is fertile in loud voices—lowered their tones in this connection: regulation, limitation, but not abolition—just yet! After all the creaking and groaning caused by the assertion of the State's plain will, it was too much to hope that the bottom had already been reached—the level on which the State and a private enterprise reduced to the lowest terms could co-operate on a peaceful footing! Though the convention again declared war on private trade, and found that a situation where 65 per cent. of wholesale, and 90 per cent. of retail, business is still in private hands, was quite unbearable, the *élan* of the first attack seems to have cooled. But what, one might ask, will be the psychological effect of this latest disturbance upon the merchant? On that point the Soviets are in a most cheery mood. They hold, and perhaps they are right, that the pleasure of making money is ineradicable in human beings!

It is strange that a government which regards historical materialism as one of its dogmas should be influencing economics through political considerations to a degree unprecedented in any other government in history.

The reason is that in the last analysis the war against the NEP is a war to win the peasant—a subject that recurs under different guises at every convention of the Party. It is certain that the rank-and-file of the peasantry think in terms of competitive economics. Private trade finds its strongest support in the rural districts. The suppression of private business and its replacement by State-controlled business are synonymous, in the eyes of the Government, with the attainment of its highest goal—the conquest of the peasants. At this convention allusion was again made to the slowness of progress in this field. Some speakers thought that the *kulak*, the “rich” peasant, the peasant who creates a social following in the

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

country by virtue of his wealth, is again gaining ground. A campaign of agitation and propaganda of intellectual and political character has been conducted in the rural districts for some years. Now a programme for an economic penetration is gradually forming—a most ambitious programme when one considers how infinitely ramified and varied peasant production has hitherto been, and will continue to be, how hard it must be to control it, and how much friction the invasion of the peasant market by inexperienced traders vested with State authority must cause. Here the State's struggle with the private trader will be hottest. By its very vastness and peculiarity, this programme again reminds us to what extent the Russian city is really the centre of Russian life, in everything at least that concerns wide-awake and assertive political opinion. The Russian countryside is an inert mass which the city must strive to mould—it is nothing but that.

This Congress has been the first since the "Lenin-Push," which brought the Party membership from two hundred thousand to something like five hundred thousand. The "Push" also raised the percentage of factory workers in the Party from 46 per cent. to 65 per cent., with a prospect of their becoming 90 per cent. in the near future. Correspondingly strong was the representation of "pure" working men among the delegates—it has never been so strong before. The Party leaders attach great significance to this change. At previous conventions newly elected delegates were on a sort of probation. This time they enjoyed full privileges of voting and speaking, as the result of a motion on which they were allowed to have a vote themselves. The "Lenin-Push" was a concession to the demand of Trotsky and the Opposition for "more air." But, as things turned out, the new members will add to the majority controlled by the "Machine." The danger of any "liberalization," of any formation of groups and factions, was met by the "Machine" with a vigorous "educational campaign" in the direction of orthodoxy, and with careful investigation as to the opinions of prospective members. Each applicant was put through a "stiff course" on the Party catechism, followed by examinations. Only the factories were allowed to present nominations without question.

SOVIET RUSSIA

The freer, more tolerant, more democratic ideas of the Opposition (if one may properly use such adjectives of Communists) possessed no such resources for working upon the rank-and-file of the Party.

Votes at the Congress were all unanimous, though not genuinely so. As a tactful manoeuvre the Opposition, certain of being beaten, preferred unanimity to defeats by strong majorities. Nevertheless, in view of the "Lenin-Push," this convention bears interesting witness to the unity, and to the insistence on unity, that prevail in the Party.

THE DEMAND FOR UNITY

(Moscow, June, 1924.)

What is called "unity within the Party" is something that must constantly be re-examined as to the various elements that now and again determine it. What are the facts at present? As things stand in Russia to-day, political power is confined to the Party, the Party Convention, and the two executive bodies which act for these: the Central Executive Committee, and, as a highly refined distillation of political talents within the Party, the Politburo (at present composed of Tomski—from the Trades' Unions, Rykov, Bukharin, Kamenev, Trotski and Zinoviev). Such are the effective powers in Russia. As compared with them, the constitutional organs of the Soviet State, the People's Commissars and their respective Councils, act only in a technical advisory capacity in certain matters. They are instruments of Power, not Power itself.

After the "Lenin-Push" Party membership rose approximately to 550,000. The Congress numbers about 1,000; the Central Committee 250; and the Politburo 7! Few as such numbers might seem in comparison with the population of Russia, they are still too large to admit of absolute and continuous unity. However, the whole power of the State rests on their shoulders, a greater power, probably, than any government or ruling group ever possessed before. The pressure toward unity is therefore enormous. Barring one exception in ten thousand, membership in the Party gives the individual, in terms of personal and political advantage, more than he can ever pay back to it. But for the Party to fall would mean

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

utter and irretrievable ruin for him. Every tendency toward opposition, or toward faction, finds a limit in that thought.

And yet antagonisms there must be! The Party leadership, to be sure, hoped that the storm of last December had subsided. This Convention was going to be a love-feast! Following that line, the incisive speech in which Zinoviev invited the Opposition to a confession of error avoided a provocative tone. Nevertheless it sent a flutter over the Convention; and Trotsky's reply was too diplomatic, too evasive, to restore unequivocal calm. Preobashenski, speaking with far from the same force, went closer to the point. On the other hand, in discussing the theme of World Revolution, Radek hit straight from the shoulder.

So, even in these Communist debates, the eternal forms of all political thinking—Liberalism and Conservatism—came to the surface! Should all available elements in Soviet Russia, nay in the world at large, be mobilized and utilized for the up-building of the Soviet State? Or should that State cling to such power as it has and studiously preserve its character as a Proletarian State? Evidently, a most portentous alternative! Peasants, factory-workers, and—to use the Party jargon—"petty-bourgeoisie"? Or peasants and factory-workers only? Semashko, People's Commissar on Public Health, went so far as to speak to the text of "Red doctors—and the dangers of a bourgeois medical profession"! Also thinking of the menace lurking in "bourgeois psychology," Zinoviev brought up a speech recently delivered by an engineer at a professional convention at Leningrad. The engineer in question complained that salaries for engineers had fallen to 28 or even 25 per cent. of what they had been before the War; while the wages of factory-hands had declined to 70 per cent. only. He concluded that "our profession can find no common language for talking with the Communists," and called for "the rights of man for engineers," if engineers were to go on with their work. "The rights of man," cried Zinoviev, "they will get some day—the day when they can see behind their ears without a looking-glass!" And the Convention laughed with him!

SOVIET RUSSIA

If proof were necessary, this incident would show what scant prospects the liberal elements have at this moment within the Party. The trend toward strict proletarianism during recent months has developed with an energy and to a degree that would have been hardly thinkable last winter. The bourgeois have lost the last privileges they had—even the privilege of consulting on matters of residence and housing with the “House-Committees.” The drive against bourgeois elements in the schools and universities has been supplemented by a sort of proletarian “heraldry-test” for State employees: “Who was your father?” “What was his income in 1917?” A mood of discouragement hitherto unprecedented has settled on the bourgeoisie.

On this point, too, one may wonder whether, now that the immediate objectives of the government have been attained, the tension on the bow may not soon be slackened a little, giving a little freer play to the more moderate ideas of the Opposition, and affording a sort of breathing space. The Party certainly has arrived at the point it was aiming at. It has consolidated and concentrated its forces, strengthened its organization, enhanced its powers of attack. Even Trotsky has yielded to the extent of abandoning the principle of political groups within the Party. So complete, in fact, has the victory of the Party proved, that Trotsky is again sitting in the Politburo—as a matter of course! No factions, but, for that very reason, all the higher premium on talents for leadership! Only a danger that the Opposition might win could keep Trotsky out of the Politburo! Radek, on the other hand, was not re-elected to the Central Committee. Somebody had to be sacrificed to the fact that the Opposition has not disappeared! Radek had gone farthest!

Yet how can we imagine that the will for unity should have overcome all natural antagonisms and that centrifugal tendencies and Party discipline should have been perfectly accommodated to each other? The war on the bourgeois went hand in hand with the elimination of all “soft” anti-centralizing elements from the Party. This discarding of lukewarm or frankly critical members was reflected even in the Congress. Inquisitorial committees, made up of factory hands, went

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

from office to office in the State departments and, after summary examinations, mercilessly dismissed "unsatisfactory" members. That factory workers only benefited by the "Lenin-Push" is all in line with this.

But if, during this past half-year, the Party has been "concentrating" so stormily and in such a thorough-going way, it has by no means done so on the mere fiat of the Party leaders. The physiognomy of this Congress was not determined by the government proper. It would be a mistake to picture the distribution of power in Soviet Russia as the cut-and-dried thing that has impressed itself on the minds of people abroad as a result of the lurid days of 1917 and of the great mass-movements: a little group of clever schemers at the top, and then, gathered about them, the masses looking upward and receiving ideas and commands from above. That has never been the true picture. There have been many definite and violent oppositions.

During the three years of the NEP the bourgeois have been presenting themselves, at least in outward appearances, in very much their former guise. The spectacle must have impressed the proletariat with increasing suspicions as to the rôle such bourgeois were playing in "its" State! The second-line leaders in the Party, men who were benefiting neither by the resumption of private business nor by the advantages that come from holding high public office, understood these misgivings and made use of them. Lenin's death deprived the "peak of the Party" of some of its prestige. Soviet Russia possesses a greater number of strong and closely co-operating heads than were ever elsewhere available for "big politics"; and now these men were suddenly and emphatically reminded of the mass foundations on which their power rested. The Opposition urged utilization to the full of all forces that existed, or could be awakened, in Russia for strengthening and extending their power. But they decided otherwise. They decided that the Soviet system could best be maintained by the means through which it had attained power! The history of these eventful six months therefore became a new and more absolute declaration of the sovereignty of the proletarian masses.

SOVIET RUSSIA

ATTACK AND COUNTER-ATTACK
(Moscow, December, 1924.)

Some two months ago a new volume of Trotsky's "Collected Works" appeared. It was entitled "1917." There was an "Introduction": "Lessons of October"—October was the month when the Bolshevik Party seized power in Russia.

The "Introduction" was the important part of the book. Its publication occasioned an aftermath to the Party quarrels of last year—an incredibly violent aftermath (does Communism ever debate any question without violence?). To be sure, the cannonading has been all on one side. Trotsky has not been allowed to reply. Not only that. On the matters in dispute he stands alone. His "Introduction" reacted most unfavourably against him, leaving him deeply hurt.

In recounting the rise of the Bolshevik Party from Lenin's arrival in the then Petrograd (April 4th, 1917) down to the overturn in October, he taxes the present leaders of the Soviet Union with "Menshevism," with compromising with the bourgeoisie—the very thing they are now attributing to him. Trotsky assails the *Troika*, the "Triumvirate"—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin—with all manner of proof, even photostatic facsimiles of newspaper articles, on the ground that during all the preparatory period, down to the moment of victory on October 25th, and even thereafter, they regarded seizure of power by the proletariat as impossible. They foresaw only the "democratic revolution," with the Bolshevik Party working with the Left in a future Russian Parliament. They regarded the forces available for a drastic effort to establish a proletarian dictatorship as far too weak. The peasantry could not be swept off its feet!

During all this time Lenin was Trotsky's ally against the "Rights." But the "Introduction" deftly casts a shadow even upon Lenin: at the beginning of the armed attack he was not in Petrograd!

Whereupon Trotsky reaches out with both hands for the laurel crown! The decision that the proletariat should make a try for power had been reached as early as October 8th. On that date a large contingent of the St. Petersburg garrison was to depart for the Front. But Trotsky, standing with the Soviets,

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

forced the provisional government not to allow the troops to be sent away. That act brought the Soviets out of the dark into the light. It was the beginning of the armed "Social Revolution" and the end of the "Democratic Revolution." This, says Trotsky, was the real "October 25th." It was the triumph of "Left-Bolshevism" over "Right-Bolshevism." Who did all that? Trotsky!

This interpretation of the history of the October Revolution is a characteristic example of Trotsky's "Napoleonism," so often mentioned. He goes on to draw lessons from it. In October, 1923, the situation in Germany was such that a strong hand might have attained results as spectacular as those realized by Trotsky and Lenin in Russia in 1917. However, nothing came of the opportunity. The "Rights" had their way!

On this particular point there came a prompt reply from Kusmin, secretary of the "Investigation Committee" appointed to study the failure of the proletarian revolution in Germany in 1923. According to Kusmin, Trotsky brought a resolution before the investigators early in the present year, and it was seconded by Piatakov and Radek. It expressed the direct opposite of the views put forward in Trotsky's "Introduction." It held that the leaders of the German Communist Party had been altogether right in avoiding a test of power on the issue of dictatorship.

The Kusmin reply furnishes some inkling of the criminations and recriminations in which Trotsky and the Party leaders have become involved.

The *Troika*, meantime, is not in the least "Menshevist" in its manner of defending itself! The storm of protests that greeted Trotsky from Party organizations in all parts of Russia and even abroad was organized by the Party "Machine." In Moscow electric-light displays advertised various "replies to Trotsky." Stalin himself wrote a pamphlet picking Trotsky to pieces at a very tender spot—his military reputation. "Things never went well on any front, till Trotsky was somewhere else." Not a word of Kronstadt, meantime! And such pamphlets were issued in huge popular editions, while Trotsky's "Introduction" was to be had—in this land of Moscow, December, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

pamphlets!—only from dealers in rare books and antiques! The government went even further. A questionnaire was sent out to all locals in the country to see whether the necessary two-thirds majority would be available for expelling Trotsky from the Party. The results have not been divulged; but, really, in spite of the bitter feelings, there has been no serious intention of expelling him. The move, rather, was made in order to discredit him as far as possible.

In all this counter-attack the Party "Machine" worked with its usual smoothness and swiftness, while Trotsky was lying idle, dumb and mumm, at Archangelskoie, the sometime castle of the Yusupovs, near Moscow. He suffered a second attack of illness early in the winter—tuberculosis of the pectoral glands, a recurrence of stomach ulcers of long standing, high temperature. This time he will hardly be able to get to the Caucasus!

His friends are as inactive as he! The truth is that were he to appear in public the multitudes would hail him wildly!

His opponents realized that they had to attack him on a front as wide as possible. They understood that in spite of its one-sidedness, the dispute was just one phase of a protracted struggle for power, power over the Party and, therefore, over all Russia. As to the original charge of Trotsky, the *Troika* made the wisest reply that could have been made. They said that, of course, at that time they had been mistaken; but that since that time Trotsky had been wrong a thousand times, that his mistaken policies had put the Party in danger on numberless occasions; and that Lenin, and the men who had been wrong in 1917, had saved the day by standing united against him. They said it was a question of "Trotsky-ism versus Leninism"—the Leninism which the Party Centre represented and which was to-day the backbone of Russia.

Zinoviev dug deepest in his attack—the expression of a bitter personal feud—on the "liberalizing Menshevist Trotsky." The Trades Unions were an inexhaustible reservoir of Menshevism, of democratic Socialism. Yet had not Trotsky tried to bring them into the State? Had he not, in 1921, almost been willing to split the Party on that issue? Had he not tried

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

to make the Trades Unions and the Soviets over into democratic organs of government, in such a way as to deprive the Communist Party of direct control over the State? In trying to give greater influence to young men in the Party, had he not actually strengthened the power of the old and the new NEP? Trotsky posed as a radical. Was it not truer to say that he was a "Right" working with the methods of the "Left"? Trotsky was for postponing currency reform till industry should "be standing on its feet." What was that but increasing the dependence of the State on private industry, and on the class of technicians? (I am putting this a little more bluntly than Zinoviev thought necessary, for his specially informed audience.) The irrepressible Zinoviev further accuses Trotsky of under-estimating the strength of counter-Revolutionary Social Democracy in Russia, and of Fascist and democratic currents in the Comintern. And consider furthermore Trotsky's schismatic behaviour *vis-à-vis* of the Party "Machine"! You always find Trotsky in a half-Menshevist, half-democratic position! Not that any special danger threatens the Party on that account! It is not a question of punishing anybody! All the same—the Party should be protected against repetitions of such attacks! We have had enough of them—that's the gist of the matter!

"TROTSKI-ISM" AND "LENINISM"
(Moscow, December, 1924.)

I have said that Trotsky was very much surprised at being so bitterly attacked for a mere "historical introduction." But in book reviews and educational lectures earlier in the year had he not followed the very same tactic of using things apparently far away in time to hack at things of the immediate present? Who could be sure his quiver did not contain more shafts than he had shot in his "Introduction," and more deadly ones? And Trotsky stands alone in this quarrel!

The truth is that with his "Introduction," with everything he has done this year, and perhaps even with the fight he made in 1923, Trotsky has shaken the framework of the Party, but he has given it nothing! The man in whom many see such a diabolical urge to activity has shown since Lenin's
Moscow, December, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

illness and death little save a diabolical urge to wag his tongue ! It must be remembered, of course : Trotsky is a sick man. In publishing his "Introduction" he made the disastrous mistake of misjudging the effectiveness of a verbal attack upon an enemy equipped with all the elements of real power. Were he not a sick man he would know that after such an error he could win out only by fighting on in spite of his defeat, by coming out into the open with his own proposals. The only other alternative would be a long, long silence.

In any event, just what his proposals are is known by inference only, and Zinoviev has done more towards clearing up the mystery than Trotsky himself. "What Trotsky wants" is one of the obscurest subjects covered in the code-jargon of the Party, in which the living questions that arise in connection with this government born of theory have to be discussed. Trotsky thinks this much, at any rate : that Communism is leaving too many of the available elements in the country lying idle and paralysed on the ground. He thinks this is an unhealthy outlook on things. His instincts as an organizer prompt him to use all possible resources, and the foreign as well as the domestic, in behalf of the Socialist State. Trotsky certainly thinks that he could use such forces in a more effective organization than at present prevails in the field of proletarian economics.

Europe makes a gross mistake in imagining that Trotsky is not a radical ! The conflict between Trotsky and the *Troika* is certainly not being fought from opposite poles, as is supposed by people who hope and believe that Soviet Russia must soon become a "comfortable" country again. The point rather is this. Alongside of the political dictatorship of the proletariat, of the Party, that is, which, with too one-sided a view of things, locates the Central Committee at the hub of all decisions, Trotsky would build up a democracy of talents. Along with the Party organization, an organization of creative energies, a task at which he feels himself a master !

Just what point, one might ask, has the Trotsky *Troika* dispute reached ? Trotsky's opponents are talking about "Trotsky-ism," a word that is intended to suggest heresy, not to say treachery, as compared with an orthodox

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

"Leninism." The facts themselves help to make the situation clearer. After Lenin's death the Party had to seek support inside itself, in very literal truth to make itself over anew. It had to attain a complete and a powerful unity. Otherwise it would have gone under, and with it the Russia of to-day. Now at the present moment the Party possesses this unity. It has achieved a solid structure—the work, in many respects admirable, of Stalin—of Stalin more than of anybody else. But unity, after all, is a word, very much as "discipline" is a word. Even when it rests on a dogma, which in turn rests on the speeches, articles and pamphlets of Lenin, sanctified as ultimate oracles, it remains a stiff and formal thing. Something more than unity and discipline among Russia's effective rulers is necessary to rouse the country to productive life. Just when the Party is attaining perfect organization at last, it also shows symptoms of weariness—"Party-fatigue," it might be called. There is good reason for such fatigue. The Party is too well organized. Discipline is too absolute. The free play of individual initiative is lacking. Even had there been no Trotsky, there would have been a "Trotsky-ism"!

Trotsky could hardly have seen before its publication one of the latest studies of Preobrazhenski, an "Old" revolutionist, who has often gone a way of his own. In the article in question Preobrazhenski sets up the dictum that "the greater the volume of business controlled by the petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, after seizure of power by the proletariat, the greater the extent to which the proletariat is forced to make use of what is still pre-Socialistic in the economic field." And he goes on to say that the proletariat of Soviet Russia must, since it can do nothing else, become an "exploiter of the petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry," the way the feudal lords of the Middle Ages exploited the serfs, or the way "the imperialistic powers to-day exploit their colonies."

Such pronouncements correspond to things as they really are in present-day Russia. They show what is going on irrespective of official Partydom: a demand for a broader and undogmatic grappling with the facts, which Russia has present before her eyes as the result of a revolutionary experience of over five years.

SOVIET RUSSIA

Tendencies of this kind may well be called "Trotski-ism." In spite of everything Trotski has a following pretty much everywhere, people who expect of him some ingenious stroke that will awaken Russia to full activity, people whom his arbitrary ways and his lion-like self-confidence will stir to enthusiasm.

So we always get back to the personal equation—a self-centred Trotski facing a self-centred Party. The Party is not Russia—it must still become Russia. But Trotski is not the Party either; though, at the moment of action, he has difficulty in thinking of himself in any other terms. In spite of his many admirable qualities, that was the glare-ice on which he has just slipped. If Trotski cannot find a way to fit himself into the Party, he is lost. Not one of his followers but understands that!

The *Troika* has beaten him, and quite properly so. The *Troika* understood the mandate of this year of Lenin's death. Trotski did not. The Party had to exist in full efficiency before it could be used for the very tasks to which many people find Trotski best adapted. Trotski, however, chose to go his own course. So the Party organized itself, not with him, but against him! He continued to receive flattery and deference, but bit by bit power slipped from his hands, till silently but effectively his "cornering" was complete. He imagined that he could use his agile pen to hoard his capital in popularity for more active times, and even to increase it. He was compelled to lay it aside. It is certainly the best pen in Soviet Russia—as witness the fact that it has ruined the hand that wielded it! To be sure, this historic struggle—so different from the decline of the French Revolution after its high point—is not yet at an end, whatever may be Trotski's personal fortunes. Between the fatal egocentricity of the Party and the suicidal egocentricity of the man Trotski, the situation in Russia may at any moment turn to tragedy.

PARTY CONCENTRATION

(Moscow, March, 1925.)

For a year before his death Lenin was virtually helpless. He was a physical wreck. In spite of that, decision on the

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

big questions often remained with him; and with some of his successors he parted on most unfriendly terms. After his death the Party had to depend on itself. No one at the time knew what would become of it, without "the Old Man"!

This past year, counting from March to March, has seen political energies developing at the expense of all other energies. The Party had to be rallied to its ideal goals, to the characteristic positions to which it would be willing to stand committed for all time. Otherwise it would fly apart. Trotsky's battle for the Party, at its bitterest in December, 1923, gave warning as to what might be expected on that score. But to give the Party a permanent stamp, an enduring physiognomy, all opportunisms, all thoughts of social conciliation, all ideas of withdrawal from economic leadership in any respect, had henceforward to be combated. In turning to extremism, in fact, the Party has actually found within itself that centre of gravity which it had formerly found in Lenin's resolute idealism and uncanny foresight, as well as in its own remarkable powers of adaptability—one thinks of the way the Prussian Army survived after the death of Frederick the Great.

To-day the soundness of Party discipline has been raised beyond all doubt. So has the Party dogma. One could not aver that the self-discipline of each individual member corresponds to the strength of Party discipline at large; but certainly there are no fewer convinced Communists now than there were in 1921, individuals devoutly resolved to be those perfectly fitting arcs which it is their duty to be in the long curve traced by the Party. To consolidate the Party in this sense—a consolidation of ideals and of forces—became the overshadowing problem on Lenin's death. To-day it may be considered solved.

And the price? The price, whatever it may have been, has been paid by the NEP, by a much persecuted private capital, "competed dead," as the phrase goes, through harassing decrees and regulations; by the bourgeoisie in all its ramifications, in all its traditions—for this year it has lost what little hope in the future it still retained; and finally,

Moscow, March, 1925

SOVIET RUSSIA

by rural agriculture, as the victim of a powerful drive for State Socialism.

And the same policy toward the foreign world! This has been a year of recognitions, yes; but it has been the year for a declaration of war upon all the bourgeois world hurled from the battlements of Communism. Soviet policy taken as a whole reminds one of an angler, quietly and artfully playing his fly, according to rules, with his right hand, but using a revolver on his quarry with his left. Of course, the bourgeois world abroad presents a far different picture from the bourgeois world at home; but a provocative attitude toward it served just as well, and was perhaps just as necessary, for the strengthening and consolidation of the Party's texture. Here too there has been a price, as witness the demeanour of England. Despite many testimonials of friendship, relations have grown strained—a fact obtrusively apparent now that the Conservatives have returned to Power with the assistance of Zinoviev and his famous letter to the British Communists. And in France, too, Herriot had to give way, as a comment on Zinoviev!

It is the habit in Europe to think of "the inner circle" of the Party as the *Troika* formed by the alliance of Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev. Really "the inner circle" is larger than that. It comprises: the "Old" revolutionists—the men who went to Siberia; then young men who earned their stripes in the campaigns of the Civil Wars; finally many who have deserved well of economic Communism since 1917 or 1918. The more closely and patiently one examines the policies of the Party, the stronger one's impression grows that the inner relations between the organs of power—the Politburo, the Party bureaucracy, the Party censorship—are essentially democratic. That the leaders lead, that the *Troika* first and foremost represents the Party, does not invalidate this view. But it is quite another question whether to-day, when the Party will must be imposed upon the huge and solid masses in the country at large, the *Troika* is still keeping pace with that effort.

Zinoviev has always gone a step farther than the other members of the *Troika*. One has only to compare his speeches

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

to-day with those he delivered last year when the Communist offensive was at its height. He has acquired a practical—not merely a propagandistic—influence, which he never had before. Rakovski was in Moscow a few weeks ago. He doubtless made clear to everyone just what effect Zinoviev's utterances are having on the foreign relations of the Union. Certainly the mysterious circumstances connected with the Estonian riots are tending to weaken Zinoviev. When he is on a platform, his bitterest antagonists cannot escape the ravishing power of his eloquence. But it is a different story, at the council table. In personal contacts he is unmagnetic and rude. He has never been the darling of the Party.

TROTSKI'S RETURN

(Moscow, June, 1925.)

While people abroad and—this would be their excuse, to a certain extent—people in Moscow were favouring Trotsky with all sorts of appointments to positions at the head of the government, he was being quietly groomed for nomination to an associateship on the Supreme Economic Council and to the chairmanship of the Concessions' Bureau. This was exactly what had been foreseen by the few who were in a position to distinguish the probable from the improbable in present-day Russia, and by the fewer still who had positive information. If Trotsky came back at all, it would be in some administrative post, something that would guarantee his strict and unconditional attention to business—nothing that would smack even remotely of leadership.

The Soviet State has an excess of some two millions annually in births. There is nevertheless a desperate insufficiency of men capable of filling positions of responsibility. The fact only emphasizes the praiseworthiness of Trotsky's self-abnegation in accepting a subordinate post. People generally think of his career in terms of Napoleonic analogies or of phrases such as *Aut Cæsar aut nihil!* This betrays a misunderstanding of Trotsky's character.

The Supreme Economic Council, like all the Commissariats, is organized as a board. Trotsky is one of four men who direct
Moscow, June, 1925

SOVIET RUSSIA

its labours under the general direction of Dzerzhinski. Dzerzhinski's outlook and actual performances have become clearer since his speeches at the last Union Congress. Such industrial production as is controlled and managed by the State is in the hands of the Supreme Economic Council. Production of this kind has increased greatly during the past year. In some branches the growth has been astonishing. But unless the economic atmosphere in which this increase is taking place changes very shortly, there will be a danger lest the "speeding up" become a source not of advantage but of disaster. It is hardly a secret, any longer, that a bitter quarrel on this point is in progress between the Supreme Economic Council and the Commissariat on Foreign Commerce.

Industry needs a thoroughgoing replenishment in plant. To become independent it must have radical assistance from foreign countries. The technical situation in the factories is resulting in very high prices on manufactured goods—the machinery is either superannuated, or worn out, or both. In a spirit of sportsmanlike doggedness many plants have made up their minds to "go it alone." But to refuse all importations of machinery from abroad, and all assistance from abroad in the form of technical superintendence, can only mean an increase in the unfavourable balance that is weighing upon many plants and can only result in making the great goal, independence, still more remote. Now the Commissariat on Foreign Commerce is bent on showing a favourable trade balance this very year. The Supreme Economic Council, instead, stands on a principle expressed in an old demand of Trotski and which has been satirized as "foreign intervention through commodities." Trotski is now with Dzerzhinski, and the latter is closer to Stalin than ever.

Another thing! Trotski has been put in charge of the scientific and technical department of the Supreme Economic Council. This will bring him into contact with such bourgeois "experts" as have placed themselves at the disposal of the Régime, and occupy a very fluctuating position in the Soviet organization, affected as they are by every change of direction in the political wind. That Trotski, in particular, should be exposed to contamination by such elements is a fact capable

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

of a variety of interpretations. One may say, for instance, that it shows that Trotsky's position and prestige inside the Party has been grossly misjudged, that, at any rate, his reconciliation with his opponents must be very thoroughgoing. One may also say, and many people believe, that this appointment, as well as that to the chairmanship of the Concessions' Bureau, is just a trap to catch him.

Experience has made it clear to me that the less sensationally we look at questions of politics in the Soviet Régime the closer we come to the truth. Putting Trotsky in charge of the whole project of national electrification seems to betray sound sense and the best goodwill—goodwill, because in this work he can only increase his popularity with the peasantry, where his strength is already remarkable. To “bring light to the peasant,” to provide all of them with easy access to power, was one of Lenin's most beloved ideas. From the Caucasus (where a German company is in charge) all the way north to Leningrad, electrification has been prosecuted with the greatest energy. Many ripe plums are hanging on this tree for Trotsky to garner.

These, then, are the posts which have been entrusted to Trotsky, and, as we have seen, they are not positions of leadership—the decisions of the Supreme Economic Council are reviewable by three higher groups, two official, and the third at least semi-official. Yet the nature of these posts is such that they can easily afford a personality as vigorous as Trotsky's, plenty of room for action, plenty of opportunity to have his loyalty appreciated and confidence in him restored.

Another post held by Trotsky, and which might be his most important one, has dropped momentarily out of sight. After all, he is a member of the Politburo! Trotsky was kept in this office, which he has filled since 1917, after his vacation in the Caucasus last January, and at a time when he was being expelled, with abundant publicity, from all his other posts. Now, only the Party Congress can remove him from the Politburo. Since his return to Moscow he has been “lying low” as to his functions there. His situation will not be made entirely clear till the Party Congress meets.

SOVIET RUSSIA

The case against Trotski will hardly be pushed. At the end of last year the Party was being incited against him by a most virulent campaign, and with a success more apparent than real. It will be difficult to reverse policies toward him otherwise than very gradually. A swing toward "liberalism" was seen to be necessary even when the campaign against him was at its height; but it must not be advertised as a swing—and this not merely on grounds of prestige, as people abroad are prone to believe. A little liberal shading is necessary to meet temporary circumstances and realize immediate goals! There is no question as to a general repainting! The machine needs retouching here and there—mostly a matter of details! Only a minimum in Communistic values in ideas as well as in organization—are to be sacrificed. The continuity of Communist thought in its application to realities is to be preserved under all circumstances, and therewith the means which will make it effective! And all this will be done with special precautions as to the young—the relief-guard that must inevitably come! They must not begin to doubt and suddenly turn to Trotski! A long game!

At the time of the protracted and very difficult negotiations (conducted principally by Rykov and Stalin) which led to his return, Trotski was called upon to choose between two alternatives: either to offer defiance, wait for a party to grow up about him, force through a democratic programme within the orbit of the Communistic dictatorship; or else to co-operate on certain concrete problems, causing no disturbance to the development of the Soviet State in the form it has had—on the contrary, helping it along. Trotski optioned for the second of these, and the fact is more suggestive, more fascinating—I might even say, more modern—than a march upon a Russian Paris from a Caucasian Elba would have been.

The inner stability of the Soviet Union is to-day so great that a man like Trotski sees that he can use his enthusiasm and his talents in no other way than by fitting himself into the picture somehow and contributing still further to that stability. But that the Centre of the Party should ally itself with him again is a fact just as significant for those who feel called upon to diagnose the case of Soviet Russia. We are

THE FIRST TROTSKI CRISIS

inclined to under-estimate the depth and the influence of the rough-and-ready camaraderie which unites the present leaders of the ruling Party in spite of their Leninesque severity toward one another. Impressed by the ruthlessness and the boundlessness of their determination we forget how clever and intelligent their conduct has to be. In spite of everything, Zinoviev has not fallen! Trotsky is back in his place! The spirit and the aspiration that are common to them all remain somehow unspoiled, untarnished. It is true that in this much tried country, and in this much tried Régime, hard facts from month to month refute the plans which idealisms, theories, passions have made for them. But Europe goes wrong in foreseeing on that account, tragic dramas, violent disruptions, automatic collapses. The men acting on this historic stage are statesmen, statesmen to the last degree. They are fighting for their lives, and to the last ditch! It is sometimes a hard task to make their various talents co-operate, but in the end they go flowing along together. For one thing, Europe compels them to!

Such I take to be the moral of Trotsky's "come-back."

CHAPTER II

STALIN'S VICTORY

THE CONSPIRACY IN THE WOODS
(Moscow, July 28th, 1928.)

The "Conspiracy" has been the talk of the town for five weeks past. The fancy of the town-gossips, ordinarily so fertile, did not in this instance go further than to invent an "Address," which certain members of the Party handed to Stalin after coming to an agreement at a midnight meeting in a forest. The name of Latchevitch was mentioned. The meeting was said to have taken place at his *datcha*, the term given to the summer homes certain Muscovites have in the neighbourhood of the city. The trouble is—Latchevitch has no *datcha*! He lives at the Kremlin.

One thing, nevertheless, transpires from the limping effort of popular fancy: a general belief in the stability of the present structure of the Régime as the latter appears, officially, or is officially made to appear. No one believes any serious disturbance of the "Machine" possible. No one has any inclination to believe that any move against the "Machine" can be kept secret for more than twenty-four hours. At what point, in what group of people, could this rule, or rather this eternal law, of a flourishing dictatorship be set aside? In one place only—the very place where the great surprise of the moment has occurred: among the leaders themselves!

Latchevitch was a member of the Revolutionary Council of War. He was a revolutionary celebrity long before the career of a revolutionist bore any halo of glory in Russia. He played a prominent part in the Civil Wars. Lenin called him the "man with wires in place of nerves." During the Civil Wars the more difficult tasks of leadership were entrusted to him: he commanded retreats; he led the rearguards. When he was appointed commandant of Moscow it was taken as a sign that Moscow was soon to be evacuated. Wires?

STALIN'S VICTORY

The man's nerves were electric cables! When Lenin died it was he who brought the news to the Party Committee. He gave the details in full, without a tremor in his voice. Of late, Latchevitch has been a member of the War Council (understudy to Voroshilov, the War Commissar), executive in a number of bureaus, and member of the Party Committee, of that same committee to which he brought the news of Lenin's death and which has just now been sitting in judgment upon him!

His crime? Activity "against the Party"! Latchevitch has been trying to organize a faction, and has been using illegitimate means in doing so: to wit, secret meetings with individuals unnamed; secret propaganda conducted with secret documents relating to matters confidential to the Politburo and the Party "Machine" and calculated "to discredit the Party." All this constitutes a "conspiracy against the Party."

The Party affects strong language, rather than not. No one can imagine that Latchevitch and his friends were thinking of overthrowing the government. They wanted to force their policies on the Party. Now the Party that is ruling Russia has always entered the lists against minorities as a gigantic uniform monolith all of one piece. It regards this uniformity as its historic birthright, and takes the position that Party members are forbidden to discuss certain subjects in public; and as for action, any action "on the side" is "directed against the Party"! However, uniformity thus understood has never ceased to be one of the Party's problems. The Latchevitch episode is not the only one of the kind to show that the problem is even more urgent than ever, precisely because the Party pretends that the problem does not exist!

But hitherto the Opposition, in its many colours, has been unorganized. It was a mass of opinions, and nothing more. This is the first case of "organized resistance," of "conspiracy." The fever chart of resistance has shown a regularly rising curve since 1921. In reading it we must beware of schematic interpretations. Latchevitch is a straightforward honest man, of military background. Moreover, ramifications of the "conspiracy" lead into the Komintern. There sat people who were devotedly loyal to Zinoviev, people used to

Moscow, July 28th, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

tapping typewriters and working "in the dark," used to writing letters and manifolding them! In spreading these mistaken doctrines they did not care to get themselves into hot water.

The man who issued the invitations for the romantic assemblage in the woods was Belinki, an official at the Komintern. It was a question of "sounding out" the factory workers, the rank-and-file in that great circle that is concentric to the all too exclusive "inner circle." The "sounding out" was with a view to the coming elections. A *coup-d'état*? An overturn? Ridiculous! Just a hearing for a few ideas, and a desire for certain guarantees that when a fellow came forward with a proposition he would not be gagged, as Trotski had been, and Zinoviev after him! Such the Latchevitch "conspiracy"! Some democratic countries of the West have an institution known as "His Majesty's Opposition." In Russia to-day that would be called "continuous rebellion."

There can be no doubt as to the bitterness and violence of the passions that are constantly whipping each other to fury in the bosom of the Party dictatorship. But they have very little bearing on the solid consistency of the Party as to fundamentals. This cohesion is determined, if by nothing else, by external circumstances. In the last analysis all the participants in these furious battles of opinion depend on the conquest which they have made in common. A man may have an office on the north side of the Kremlin, not on the south where the sun shines. But after all it is the only place he has to live in! Furthermore, they all share the same revolutionary ideas. And there is always hope! If a war should break out—it is no mere coincidence that the Soviet press should be discussing the chances of war, just now, on pretexts conveniently furnished by Pilsudski—the front ranks would close up and the last in leadership to-day might be the first to-morrow!

But the question remains: does uniformity on fundamentals necessarily force the conclusion that the Party must be "uniform on all points," even minor ones? The Party now has 700,000 members. There are 300,000 aspirants to Party

STALIN'S VICTORY

membership. There are 300,000 Communists in responsible positions in the Party. Soviet Russia to-day is ten times as strong as she was at the time of the Tenth Party Congress. The government machinery is ten times more complicated. The constitution of the country gives the Party the Dictatorship. In point of fact, the Dictatorship rules the Party. Only the will of the leaders finds expression. Changes during the past year show that even leaders of the innermost circle can fall because of their personal convictions—Sokolnikov, Kamenev, Zinoviev. The point is that, when they fall, they must be silent—they, and their followers. Among these are men of tested powers of leadership. By no means all of them are in the first line. But the shadow of the Kremlin is spreading out over the second line also. Whatever their conception of the welfare of the Party (of the “ruling powers,” as the phrase goes here) they must regard it as their private opinion so long as it is not the approved policy of the government. This, quite bluntly expressed, is the situation. Such, at any rate, is the spirit of Party discipline. From a Western point of view the remarkable thing is that it has taken five years for the Opposition to make an effort to “get together” regardless of consequences.

All eyes, meantime, are again on Trotski. His stubborn, genial, shaggy, undiplomatic head seems to have been at the bottom of all this. For him the genuine revolution has always been an affair of the city. He had never had any use for the “romantic dilettantism” which has brought Latchevitch and Zinoviev to grief. Zinoviev stumbled not only on the question of domestic policy. It seems his activities in the Komintern also made him impossible. That is a sign. One may always have observed that whenever Stalin upsets an Opposition, he takes its platform as his guide and then applies its ideas on his own authority in the form which seems to him the proper one. What his opponents put forward as radical change, he fits into the routine of administration, the stability of which is the thing of first importance with him. The slogan of the moment is: “About face toward the country!” Stalin is in close sympathy with the great Russian peasantry; but he is striving meantime to strengthen the city. Broader bases

SOVIET RUSSIA

of economic initiative, yes ; other measures, yes ! But without violent shocks ! The peasants will not stand for them ! The motley Opposition as a whole is always thinking of " new perspectives," fundamental reversals, thoroughgoing changes ! But that is the psychology of the spiritually active town, where the new idea is a commonplace. The peasant plods along very slowly. There are five city-centres of Communism in Soviet Russia which may be said to represent that city type which is commonly thought of as underlying the proletarian revolution. There are two hundred Party centres in the rural districts !

These two hundred rural centres comprise the weight of Party power both as regards personnel and resources. In them may be found the germ of a kind of democracy the towns never dreamed of, a Party democracy guided not by ideas but by needs, brutal needs !

However, autumn will show that the city has not given up the fight.

THE OPPOSITION RETREATS (Moscow, October, 1926.)

The crisis in the Party lasted barely three weeks—an indication of its acute character.

On September 29th, Trotski, Radek, Sapronov, Piatakov and Zinoviev appeared before the Communist " cell " in a small factory. To the surprise of everyone their speeches all dealt with themes, discussion of which had been " forbidden," bluntly forbidden, by a Party resolution adopted last year. This concerted " coup " challenged the Party Majority, or rather the leaders of the Party Majority, to open warfare. It was a deliberate breach of discipline.

In thus coming out into the open, the Opposition was digging a dark and deep abyss before its feet ; for how would the Majority, how especially would Stalin, who bears the modest title of General Secretary of the Party, take this violation of all the principles on which the Party has been working during these past years ? On October 17th, statements were given out, and they fitted into one another pretty well. One came from the Central Committee, which must be taken

STALIN'S VICTORY

as the Executive branch of the Party and stands next to the supreme Politburo. The other came from the leaders of the Opposition, all names which have shone resplendent in Party history, all sometime spokesmen of the Party at one critical moment or another during the Revolution. As far as words go, the statement of the Opposition manifested praiseworthy sentiments of subordination, for which the Majority statement duly issued a sharply couched receipt-in-full.

The immediate impulse to the public appearance of the Opposition was, one may guess, the successful fusion of the several Oppositions: the oldest of them, Shlapnikov's Workers' Opposition, which Lenin broke up; next, Zinoviev's new Opposition; then, Kamenev's so to speak "classic" Opposition of the Communist State (always associated with a frankly opportunistic outlook); finally, Trotsky's Opposition, the common denominator of them all. In the last analysis, they all are gathered about the all too passionate, the all too audacious, Trotsky!

Trotsky's decline began shortly before Lenin's death, for it was then that the struggle for power began. Dissension was already apparent in September and October, 1923, the "year of the Ruhr," on the issue of the exportation of the revolution to Germany. It resulted in the first elimination of Trotsky, who was, at the time, a sick man. (It has now been announced that the cause of his illness was a tonsillar infection which has since been cured.) Ill health, at any rate, made him so irritable that he piled one tactical error on another. He made a campaign against Party bureaucracy in behalf of Party democracy. He led another for industrialization—for "unshackling the productive forces of the country." But he did not refrain from a purely personal eruption—his volume called "1917." After that he started a still worse argument at the Politburo—the details in this quarrel have never been revealed: Max Eastman has reported some of them in his book called "Since Lenin Died"—but obviously not the whole story—to show that Lenin had chosen him as his successor.

Stalin, meantime, demonstrated that, successor or no successor, the Party belonged to him. A storm was let loose

Moscow, October, 1926

SOVIET RUSSIA

on Trotsky and "Trotsky-ism," and during it Trotsky was not allowed once to open his lips. His supporters, so far as they could be dispensed with, were dismissed from the positions they held. The picture of a dogmatic "Leninism" was painted over the Party in lurid colours, and everything that was of Trotsky or smacked of Trotsky was of the Devil. Those were the days of the *Troika*, the triumvirate: Kamenev, Zinoviev, Stalin. Trotsky, himself, was left with a few positions. He was kept on in the Politburo. In this moderation the *Troika* was doubtless playing a Machiavellian game; for the contrast between the leniency shown Trotsky and the severity used against his followers was striking.

Proud, nervous, inclined to brood, Trotsky must have suffered under all this loss of power. What kept his spirit alive seems to have been a feeling that in the long run things would speak for him, that facts in the end would cry his name aloud. Did not the Majority hasten to adopt his policies—to be sure in its own spirit—the moment he was out of the way?

These thoughts of his led a modest life in a number of theoretical books and newspaper articles; but they were never allowed to appear in the Party press. They were expressed less modestly, we may well suppose, in daily contact between the Majority leaders and the Opposition within the walls of the Kremlin.

END OF THE "TROIKA"
(Moscow, October, 1926.)

Trotsky had been liquidated, it seemed. And Zinoviev and Kamenev followed on his heels.

These developments were attributed to Stalin's absolutism; and the conclusion is a natural one in view of the progressive defoliation from the Party leadership of all those strong and triumphant individualities who dated from the heroic days of the Revolution. Nevertheless one could not be too cautious in such judgments. Zinoviev clung to the leadership only so long as his capacities as a charmer of mobs were useful. The point may be shown in detail: the attack on Germany in the autumn of 1923; the attack on private trade

STALIN'S VICTORY

in 1924; the proclamation of the drive for world revolution, which, in England certainly, will long be a source of anger and suspicion against the Soviet Union. All this brought Zinoviev into the limelight.

But within a year after the silencing of Trotski, it became apparent how discordantly strung the *Troika* was. Stalin alone had worked out a viewpoint embracing the whole of the vast Russian territory (he is eminently a statesman). When it was a question of forcing Trotski out, Stalin's grip on the Party Machine, down to the last vote, showed itself with frightful power. So now he has worked out a perfect understanding of the conditions which are determining present-day Russia both economically and politically. Toward the end of 1924 he saw, before Zinoviev even thought of the matter, that the time had come to beat a retreat both in domestic and foreign policy. His sharp sober sarcasm began to sting his comrades with greater and greater frequency. His policy automatically and progressively demolished the foundations of their appeal to the rank-and-file. Zinoviev's dramatic gestures as lord and master of the Komintern were ridiculed by the Stalinists under the name of "Putsh-ism." (He will soon be removed from the direction of the Komintern.) After the manoeuvring at the Congress of 1925, Stalin alone of all the *Troika* was left in solitary splendour.

That Zinoviev and Kamenev should have gone over to Trotski has its basis in something more than personal considerations. At the time of their furious attack on "Trotskism," they had always addressed themselves to the cities and sought their support in the factory proletariat. Stalin had fought for a balance between town and country, with the idea of drawing the peasantry closer to the factory workers. Were it at the cost of great sacrifices on the part of the latter, it would be their contribution to the future greatness of the Soviet State! That was his "Leninism," and he could rightly call it such.

Now if one examine in retrospect Zinoviev's activity at the time of his glory when he walked arm in arm with Stalin, it is easy enough to see that Zinoviev (and the same is true of Kamenev) was never in anything better than the outposts

SOVIET RUSSIA

of Stalin's position, that he never, really, warmed to the peasantry. Both Zinoviev and Kamenev had no sense of the importance of that great element in Russian life.

When Trotsky preaches industrialization, he means strengthening the city by every possible means, even at the expense of the peasant. Stalin's policy of a compromise he regards as stagnation, a situation in which neither town nor country can find elbowroom for development, and where the Communist power is in danger of sitting down between two chairs. Industrialization, thoroughgoing, and using every available means, even bourgeois intelligence and bourgeois capital, and whether domestic or foreign—such he and his followers think is the one way to give the peasant what he needs, even if not at once. Trotsky's programme has a tradition that goes back in history beyond the outbreak of the Revolution, as far back as Count Witte, not to say Peter the Great. However proper it may be to recognize the rather schematic rigidity of Trotsky's socialistic principles, it is none the less true that his ideas of the procedure required to attain the goal of Communism are, from the bourgeois point of view, more universally and more tolerantly conceived than those of his antagonists.

But these qualities were least influential in winning him Zinoviev's following. What reconciles Zinoviev to Trotsky in the last resort is their common attitude toward the proletariat, and the desire they both have to return to power over the proletarian route.

There are, or may be, a great many incompatibilities between these various Oppositions—the Centre never tires of pointing them out. But they have all one common ground on which they can make their fight and which must be the only thing to count in their present situation: they are "city Communists."

Against them all Stalin has held and still holds the Party organization, and he is busily using it to create sentiment to their disadvantage. One after the other, the "versatile Westerners" are vanishing from high positions in the State—a loss sincerely deplored by Stalin, for he understands how badly this new Russia needs trained intelligences. In Leningrad

STALIN'S VICTORY

thousands of Zinoviev's followers lost their positions in the space of a few weeks. The prompt settlement with his support, as was the case also with Trotsky's—and Zinoviev's name, no more than Trotsky's in the other case, was able to save them—shows the trend of political instinct in the rank and file of the Party at large. They went with Stalin—they were not forced to go with him. He not only enjoys an authority based on a very precise notion of their mental limitations. He has their confidence as well.

ZINOVIEV FALLS

(Moscow, late October, 1926.)

The Communist Party of Soviet Russia, on motion of the Communist Parties in other countries united with it in the Komintern, has filed a proposal to remove Zinoviev from the post as President of the Komintern which he has held since Lenin founded that organization in 1919, and to sever all his official connections with the world-revolutionary movement. The next Congress of the Komintern will doubtless adopt the proposal. For some months, already, Zinoviev has not been on duty at the Presidency, an office which made his name famous and became famous through him.

Overstating a little for the sake of simplicity, we may say that the name of Zinoviev has been synonymous with that violent and aggressive campaign which was to carry the victorious Russian Revolution over the whole surface of the globe. To be sure, Germany is the only country outside of Russia which has seen the man actually in action as world-destroyer-in-chief. His appearance at Halle in 1923 broke the rising wave of German Communism. Rarely have political blunders, arising from initial miscalculations, so directly, publicly and crushingly been fixed upon those responsible for them, as was Zinoviev's clarion call to murder and arson delivered at Halle on that occasion. That Zinoviev, in the face of well-grounded fears, was allowed to speak at all, must be set down as a master-stroke of political acumen on the part of the German authorities.

Zinoviev is one of the greatest orators living anywhere in the world to-day. That is his undoing. In the present

Moscow, late October, 1926

SOVIET RUSSIA

quarrel within the Party, he thought he could sweep the factory workers into the Opposition camp. His trip to Lenin-grad put the seal on his doom! Some day he may look back on his whole life as one continuous sacrifice to his eloquence and his own belief in its powers. It is, in truth, a kind of narcotic that induces pleasant dreams. His speeches begin with dry and not very elegant introductions, some fifteen minutes long. Then they are under way! His audiences are weened from their thoughts, their memories, the world they see about them, the wisdom of their experience, to follow the flood of his eloquence, which is not, curiously enough, sustained by a very pleasing voice. Otherwise sane and sound people have confessed to me that they are completely at the mercy of Zinoviev's temperament, and recover their wits only when he has vanished from the platform. In Zinoviev everything turns to excitement and passion. He is not a labourer of thought and synthesis, as Lenin was. He is not an industrious manœuvrer, as Kamenev is. He is just temperament, with strong instincts of hate. He seems to be nothing apart from this temperament and the motives that determine it. He seems never to be wholly himself till he mounts a platform. In a hall, he can hold fifty or five thousand people at his beck and call. In more intimate contacts he is fairly repulsive. There is something sinister and something peevish about him. His face, keen and intelligent in profile, looks like a sponge from in front. By virtue of these failings, he is the loneliest man in the narrow circle of the men who won the October Revolution.

Zinoviev, moreover, is not an independent spirit. Always leaning on others, he has always been used by others. During the Stalin era he has been the great spokesman, the man chosen to impart policies to the masses. Beyond that he has proved less and less available. At the present time, Stalin is managing Soviet policy quietly, and strictly apart from fireworks. His purposes are being achieved not by keeping the rank-and-file in a state of excitement, but by carefully balancing forces in city and country.

His "Putsh-ism" for some time past had been openly criticized. I am thinking of the seizure of the railroad station

STALIN'S VICTORY

by Communists in Reval in December, 1924; of the frightful bomb outrage in Sofia this year (1926); and of many episodes of violence in Germany during the autumn of 1923. Moscow has always disclaimed connection with these acts of terrorism. But in the Komintern Building, which stands just in front of the Kremlin, many intrigues were worked out in an underground way, unbeknown to anyone outside those walls. Considering the circumstances attending his fall, it is altogether probable that, with the means at his disposal, Zinoviev followed very personal policies in the Komintern. His tastes always inclined him toward the noisy, toward fire and blood, toward anything that would cripple through terror "the pillars of the capitalistic system and their bourgeois buttresses," sweep the seats of power clean with one push of the broom! But Sovietism, in its present state of development, can no longer use such tactics.

Zinoviev's fall comes as a counterpart to the Thoiry Conference which delineated the possibility of a Franco-German rapprochement (1926). In a speech at Tiflis, toward the end of 1925, Stalin conceded "the stabilization of the bourgeois world" (according to Marx, it could be only a temporary stabilization, but, at any rate, there it was). Seven months earlier Radek had been "sent to the woods" for strenuous objection to Zinoviev's radical tactic of World Revolution (the fact that he was right seems to have done him no good). But Zinoviev had to go, under the same pressures which produced the Dawes Plan, then Locarno, then Geneva, then Thoiry, and finally the manifesto of Anglo-American financiers outlining a plan for concerted effort toward a general recovery in capitalist Europe. Had these results not developed from new currents of feeling in the bourgeois world, Zinoviev might conceivably have held on, at the Komintern.

Fear of Zinoviev has always been strongest in those countries which have had least reason to fear a Red revolution, England, namely, and the United States. Germany has always judged the man more calmly, more contemptuously, and, as the event has proved, more soundly. The Soviet Union has never been Zinoviev. For most of the world, Zinoviev's figure has tended to obscure the view of the Union itself. The Soviet

SOVIET RUSSIA

leaders, to-day, must be more conscious than ever before that the Komintern is the greatest obstacle to the development of a Soviet Russia which will be strong at home and respected abroad. The Komintern is an insuperable obstacle to peaceful and profitable relations with England and the United States in particular; and on those two countries the future of the Union depends in a very special way.

The next Congress will decide all such matters. It will also decide whether the Komintern is to remain dogmatically constituted, on the model of the Russian Party, or be democratically reorganized. It must also come to a decision as to future tactics: shall it work for a slow systematic penetration among the workers of the world? Shall it admit of collaboration with the moderate Socialist Parties? Or shall it stand for Red radicalism and Red absolutism—the “Always Ready!” of Zinoviev?

CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES (Moscow, late June, 1927.)

Everything that the Opposition does, thinks, or devises, to throw in the teeth of the Majority, is cloaked if not with the mantle of love, at least with terms of the greatest reticence. The indictment drawn up by the Control Commission has been published, but what it reveals as to the actual crimes of the Opposition is scanty indeed: forbidden agitation through all Russia (doubly reprehensible in view of the protestations of subordination made by the Opposition last October); public discussion (also renounced at the same time); finally, certain remarks by Trotski. For years this man and many of his friends have been under violent attack; but the texts subject to such thorough refutation have never been indicated, save by vague allusion.

Whether the Opposition have an elaborate programme is also unknown. Certain planks in the Opposition platform have been adopted by the Majority—for instance, quite recently, the radicalization of the policy toward China. The fact that the attack on the Opposition is constantly being revived in public suggests that their arguments are serious enough to merit detailed response from the Majority. So

STALIN'S VICTORY

long as the Opposition are thus thoroughly gagged, what they demand, what they want, no one is in a position to say with precision or certainty.

This much is clear: Stalin is being accused of a "petty-bourgeois mentality," which the Opposition detect in the "compromises" that have featured his Far Eastern policy. Has he not stood with Chang-Kei-Shek, and therefore with the Kuomintang of the Right—thus neglecting to create a revolutionary spirit among the much-abused Chinese peasants? And did he not show such moderation with the idea of avoiding a break with England? Did he not approve the appointment of an Anglo-Russian Trade Union committee to which the English nominated not a single Communist but only lame-duck Socialist traitors? And in Russia itself, has he not been favouring the petty-bourgeois peasantry, and therefore reaction, in the Russian provinces? Has he not allowed the "rich" peasants to get back into their former positions? Has he not substituted the Party bureaucracy for the spontaneous political activity of the revolutionary factory workers, who have been made to pay the costs of this whole policy of compromise between city and country out of their "slender wages"? On whom is he going to depend, if a war should come?

And there are many other questions, which tend to show that Russia has drifted far, far away from the days of the Revolution which was to bring justice to the wage-slave and the poor. The creeping vines of opportunism, tolerance toward the past, compromise, are strangling the tap-root of the Revolution!

In which case—the Opposition would be an Opposition from the Left—Europe should try to accustom itself to this idea, admitted of course that the radicalism has been somewhat over-emphasized in reaction to the events of these last months, in order to take all advantage possible of the opportunities which such reaction must offer the Opposition in any event. The Opposition are concerned to show that "they were right." But a straight line connects the days when Trotsky was fighting Lenin for the nationalization of the factories (which meant unlimited power for the factory workers in Moscow, late June, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

the revolutionary State) and was being beaten, with the present moment when Stalin's statesmanship is being portrayed as anxious caution and as a compromise with all the forces which may some day cause the downfall of the Soviet State. The Opposition do not care whether or not Stalin's "compromises" are more and more being so conceived as to yield the smallest possible minimum to the bourgeoisie. They regard the carrying forward of the Revolution as the important thing, and what they have had is not enough! It is quite possible, in this light, that the restoration of extraordinary powers to the G.P.U. is quite welcome to the Opposition, as a means of sharply distinguishing revolutionary elements from the non-revolutionary, and so of making an end of all "compromises."

To all of which the Majority replies: that the Opposition themselves know that it is impossible to go as far to the Left as they pretend they want to go, without endangering the situation in the rural districts; and that, if they came into power, the first thing they would do would be to go to the Right. Whenever Trotsky has been in charge of practical problems has not he been the very one to make approaches to bourgeois circles? Has not he been the very one to preach importation of foreign assistance into Russia in a most liberalizing sense? His whole agitation now has but one objective: to find some platform on which he can return to power; and so long as that is achieved, he cares very little whether or not it spell ruin for balance and stability in the State.

Trotsky, in his turn, might answer, most soundly, that he is not insisting on his own infallibility, but that the Revolution is "losing its living forces" if personal dictatorship be imposed upon the proletarian dictatorship—and that is the case! Does not everyone in Russia know that factory workers belonging to the Opposition are in danger of losing their positions, and that many of the lesser Oppositionists have been "appointed" to unimportant posts in Siberia? Another loss of living forces—and not among the least serviceable forces! The young Soviet State, Trotsky might say, is, in this respect, showing signs of sclerosis!

STALIN'S VICTORY

EXPULSION FROM THE COMMITTEE

(Moscow, October 25th, 1927.)

The expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee has prompted *Isvestia* again to demonstrate in detail that the Party Majority is following in Lenin's footsteps. *Pravda* hints at the causes which provoked such a quick decision—it came most unexpectedly. The Opposition found fault with a manifesto just issued by the Central Executive Committee, forcing, in particular, their objection to the seven-hour day. The manifesto had been drawn at the instance of the Politburo. It was brought up for debate before the joint session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission. The Opposition persisting ostentatiously in their attitude, nothing could be done except to put through the vote of expulsion! For that matter, in the course of the last year the Opposition had publicly gone over to Menshevism, and had even established relations with bourgeois elements!

Pravda describes the expulsion as a last warning to Trotsky. In December he will have to appear before the forum of the Party Congress and show cause why he should be called a Bolshevik at all. Otherwise his expulsion from the Party will follow as a matter of course.

THE NATIONAL JUBILEE

(Moscow, early November, 1927.)

No country celebrates as many anniversaries and jubilees as the Soviet Union—expressions, which one might find naïve, of the secret wonder and the unconcealed pride which the Communists feel because, in spite of countless difficulties at home and general hostility abroad, they are where they are!

In October, 1917, a little army of Bolsheviks, by no means united, got possession of power in Russia through a surprise attack inspired by Trotsky. On November 7th, keeping pace with revolutionary events in Europe, the basic law of the new State was proclaimed. To maintain the State, the founders had at their disposal a horde of undisciplined soldiers; but they possessed in addition the spiritual resources which they had developed during years of privation, of exile and of faith in the coming Revolution. As a logical consequence

Moscow, October 25th, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

they were animated by the most extreme ruthlessness against the existing order of things, and it extended even to human life. Highly evolved specimens of an intelligence and temperament hitherto unknown in human history, they took over this gigantic and chaotic country in a spirit of cold determination. They, and men like them, have not lost to this day the power they then won. By herculean efforts, rather, they have defended it, consolidated it, extended it. It is only ten years since all this began. Ten years of untold suffering and vicissitude are now being celebrated as though they were five hundred years. In fact they are ten years with a content !

From the "European" viewpoint (to use an adjective from Soviet jargon), one or two things may be said of these heroic episodes in consolation of the wounded vanities of Europe. One may say that the fundamentally revolutionary principle of the Communist Revolution would never have had the success it has enjoyed, had not the bourgeois world been exhausted by the Great War and were it not even now still nursing its wounds. If what happened in 1917 and thereafter had happened in 1905, Europe would surely have united to deal with the anomaly of seeing a Communist country on the bourgeois face of this bourgeois globe. The Soviet Union owes its present existence to a happy chance—the mischance of Europe ! It is a "post-War phenomenon" !

But on this seventh of November we are going to hear that the Soviet Union is claiming the future of the world for itself ; that it is thinking of any war that might be compounded against it as an unfailing instrument of its own for extending the Revolution ; and that it is regarding its own victory in such a war as mathematically certain, whatever the apparent odds against it. Europe may answer that such a State could come into being only on the politically backward soil of an agrarian country crippled by its size. But then again, that same State has most efficaciously roused China from her lethargy and demonstrated the power of its idea on the territory of a country that has a time-honoured tradition of trade-unionism—England during the coal-strike ! Only ten years ! Yet those ten years furnish arguments a-plenty for not regarding these events in Russia as purely accidental, for

STALIN'S VICTORY

not dissevering them from the general trend and the common destiny of Europe and the world. Indeed, much more probably, in the next, or the two next, decades of the Soviet Union the future history of Asia and Europe may be decided.

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, as dean of the diplomatic corps in Moscow, will deliver the good wishes of the powers accredited to this republic. The ceremonial has been carefully rehearsed on both sides. Not all the powers will deliver congratulations. There will be none from England, the United States, Catholic Spain, the Holy See, Greece, the Balkan States, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia. Noteworthy the absence of the powers that control the seas—the cornerstones of the present international structure.

The Jubilee of the Soviet Union is a jubilee of successful self-assertion. Nothing shows that more clearly than the fact that the diplomatic offensive of the Soviets, which was launched at Genoa in 1922, has not yet progressed beyond the outworks of the bourgeois citadel. At that time Lenin dispatched the Soviet delegates with the warning: "Nothing definite!" That was the beginning of that tactic of "partial armistice" with the bourgeois world which is still controlling Soviet diplomacy to-day. The warning referred to the States then paramount in Europe. It is still there: "Nothing definite" with any among the victor Powers—and this despite the serious setback which the break with England constitutes!

It would be idle to speculate whether Lenin, had he lived, could have done better. In point of fact, the Union's agitation for world revolution during the recent years has crippled its diplomatic action, entailed great sacrifices on the part of the country, and even exposed the existence of the State to manifold dangers. For the people at the Kremlin have never been exclusively concerned with their physical self-assertion, but always with the assertion of an idea, with which the State stands or falls, and which, as we know (or ought to know) still dominates unchanged in this land of Russia. It betrays sheer weakness of mind to believe that Soviet Russia will ever think of giving up her Communist convictions in regard to world revolution, or will end, as a matter of course,

SOVIET RUSSIA

by "reverting to common sense." The bold and exciting foreign policy of the Soviet Union has been at all times down to the present moment inspired by the idea in the name of which the Red Flag was first hoisted on the Kremlin. It has been a pitiable spectacle to see Europe seizing upon every incident, no matter how insignificant, during these ten years, just to convince herself that people in Russia "were like people everywhere else." For many a person in Europe this Jubilee will be the jubilee of a ten-year self-deception.

Six years ago the famous NEP was proclaimed. We know to-day that it was just a device, recallable at any moment, for helping the practical working out of the proletarian Communist programme. Bourgeois business was shortly quite flourishing. Private automobiles were to be seen in Russia as early as 1923. It is known that Stalin quarrelled with Lenin at their last interview at his bedside, in 1923. The cause has never been revealed. But may not the mystery be explained by 1924, the year of the "second Revolution"? At that time 300,000 private enterprises were closed in a few months, and a general attack was made on all remnants of bourgeois Russia. Churches were closed. The children of bourgeois parents were driven with merciless fanaticism from schools and universities. The libraries were "house-cleaned," and Plato, Kant—all the glorious names of bourgeois culture, disappeared from the shelves. The younger generations were turned more emphatically into the paths of Communist, proletarian, culture. Even if such a culture were only in its beginnings, the young could at least be kept from the poisons of bourgeois learning! So, industrially, economically, culturally, the grip of Communism on Russia was strengthened, and such freedom of individual action as the NEP had allowed was for the most part withdrawn. Not the slightest protest was tolerated, and any energy that might potentially have resisted the Idea, was crushed even though it had offered no active resistance. The Monopoly of Foreign Trade was now stressed in every way possible. It was seen that the economic power of the State could be maintained only with its help. Previous concessions were allowed to lapse—they spoiled the picture in this State founded on one idea! Toward the end

STALIN'S VICTORY

of 1924, at Tiflis, Stalin delivered his epoch-making speech in which in strong, mathematically definite lines he sketched his plan for overthrowing England, and with her the capitalistic world, by a revolutionary attack upon her colonies and her economic bases in Asia.

All this has a very negative sound. But the direction of the organizing activity which the Soviet State is celebrating at this Jubilee may be made clearer by making the many things this activity has embraced. The forms of bourgeois business were replaced in large part by the creation of numberless State syndicates, trusts, departments, co-operatives. It was a work not only of creation but also of adaptation, both at home and abroad. In attempting what to us seemed impossible—a change from the Capitalistic to the Communistic system, Stalin and his associates at the Kremlin always managed to attempt only what was possible; and their achievements survive in the face of conflicts, losses, checkmates, hindrances, such as the bourgeois world in its struggle for economic existence has never known. That this achievement does survive is beyond doubt; and even ten years hence the vitality of this organization will not be refuted, provided no attempt has been made to destroy it from without.

Under perfected Communism politics will disappear. That, at least, is the doctrine of Karl Marx. But to-day, the Soviet Union is the most intensely political country on earth, in the sense that here everything derives, in the last analysis, from a definite ruling will, which takes counsel of itself and of nobody else. From that point of view, this Jubilee is much more the jubilee of the Communist dictatorship over the Soviet Union, than of the State as a "union of Soviets." A State of "Workers and Peasants" is as much of a Utopia, at least as much of an Ideal located at an astronomical distance from the real, as is the perfect Communist system in economics when compared with the State control of business which to-day prevails in Russia as the preface to Communism.

Power is in the hands of the Communist Party, as a result of Stalin's thoroughgoing organization: one million men in a population of 147 millions. Two hundred thousand of these constitute the "Active" membership, the "inner circle."

Moscow, early November, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

But not the "innermost circle"! The final impulse comes from the Politburo—eight men! The Soviet bureaucracy, the People's Commissars—in other words, the ministries attached to the eight men "at the top"—are merely instruments of those eight men. All that is understandable! It is understandable when a government finds its purpose, its meaning, in the future, and its labours are not directed toward the maintenance and improvement of a given situation (as would be the case with all other governments in the world to-day, except possibly in Italy). In Russia government is being conducted on an idea and for the sake of an idea. That idea has had a practical application over a period of ten years. Russia is the one country in the world in the eyes of whose rulers to-day is nothing, to-morrow everything. This is the source of the weaknesses and the strength which distinguish this State from all other States. What the outcome is to be we have no means of knowing. But the Army, the people, the diplomats who are to assemble in the Red Square this week are going to hear what the men in the Kremlin think on that subject. Those men are going to talk of Revolution, not of evolution. They are going to manifest more confidence in the strong points of their system than fear of its weak points. This forecast is justified by the events of the ten years that have passed.

And what about the peasant, someone may ask! It is noteworthy that Moscow, the city, from the very first days of these revolutionary years has been trying to entice the peasant into politics, into Communist politics. Yet it is still more noteworthy that for the first time in his history the Russian peasant has been stirred by a modern idea and has learned—from a wild barbaric experience, to be sure—what it feels like to be free by one's own efforts. He is still living under an iron rule that will give him freedom in its particular sense of freedom; but a beginning toward the development of individual self-respect has been made with this huge mass of essentially servile humanity. This may seem a paradoxical result for a programme that would substitute mass will for individuality all along the line and recognizes only "mass-consciousness" in political life. But history furnishes many

STALIN'S VICTORY

examples of such involuntary workings of a conscious purpose ; and even the hyper-rational statesmen of Lenin's school do not escape in this case. In this nascent sense of individuality in the Russian peasant one may detect the early dawn of a greater Europe spiritually united, of which the Russia of the Tsars gave only a faint suggestion.

But this would have to be a hope laid in some very remote future. For the moment, the war of Stalin's Majority on the Opposition confronts us with the very serious and very depressing fact that Europe and Russia are getting farther apart. The Opposition, to be sure, is markedly radical and proletarian in tactic ; but its leaders are tightly bound up with the intellectual traditions, the spiritual heritage, the thought and sentiment, of Europe, with everything, in a word, which Communist jargon styles " bourgeois." Their policies, without being any the less Communist, unmistakably bespeak such origins ; and that is why, in the end, they will be fought, eliminated, crushed. Their fate is symbolic of the fate of everything " European " in Russia.

The intellectual outlook of the clique which is now in power is dominated by anti-European, pro-Asian concepts, and that clique feels the deepest mistrust of the influence of European culture and of European concepts of life upon the character of Communists and on the development of the Russian proletariat. With a most violent wrench, and at the sacrifice of priceless values—beauty, knowledge, disinterested science—in the field of thought, young people in Russia are being cut off from Europe and diverted toward a primitive life of their own, that the Communist seed may take root in unmixed purity. Just as economic relations with the rest of the world have been throttled at the price of growing hostility from the countries thus robbed of markets, so intellectual exchanges have been brought under a paralyzing control. A terrific censorship has been erected against Europe in every respect, and the results, in the long run, can be no less painful and discouraging for Europe than the crude political and economic antagonism has been. Europe is to-day abdicating on Russian soil. " One of the presuppositions of victory ! " says Moscow. But Europe can only feel that it is a tremendous

SOVIET RUSSIA

loss, a loss sensibly felt already. Which will weigh the more in the course of history—this new Russia, or the old Europe? And again Moscow would answer that it contemplates the future with equanimity. It is Europe that should worry!

This is the Jubilee of a new political system that has deliberately set itself up on the surface of this mellow earth. It is the Jubilee of a concept of world organization in accord with that system. Those two facts alone make it an important anniversary, properly to be observed and solemnized. But one might ask: is the worship of the State as the highest and most important expression of human life not an exquisitely bourgeois thing? Does the history of the last two centuries of capitalism show much else? In our awe of the State, its overshadowing power, its overweening selfishness and pompousness, let us not forget the last and minutest atoms which give it being—human individuals themselves!

FESTIVITIES

It is not my thought to dim the glitter of this day, of these days. But after all this State pretends that it is a revolutionary State. This festival has so far revealed a disciplinary State. The "fluid of the extraordinary," which the Soviet Union claims to represent in the history of mankind, seemed somehow to be missing!

That was not the case at previous Jubilees. The acclamation that welcomed the leaders as late as 1922, when they appeared on the stage of the Great Theatre for the anniversary gathering, was much stronger, warmer, wilder, than the one which greeted the powers of to-day in the same place. This one, in the year of 1927, is an official assemblage, with all the terrors and distinctions which such festivals present. The proletarian State which intends to free the world has developed its practiced officialism during these ten years, its stamped and prescribed platitudes; and it speaks of itself, as all States do, in conventional expressions of that special admiration which they all have for themselves. To tell the truth, the soaring enthusiasms, borne aloft on momentary inspirations in days gone by, seem to be things of that same past. In their place

STALIN'S VICTORY

appears routine, the archangel of all successful consolidations. In this very room I heard Lenin remark that it would be better perhaps if enthusiasms stepped just to one side to make room for sober work on all those things which the Soviet State needed to accomplish if it were to endure.

The ceremonies in the Great Theatre to-day suggested that perhaps Lenin's wish has been fulfilled. It was a sober gathering. The iron band that holds this State together, heated of yore in such a hot fire, has grown cold and hard. Properly so: everyone has his place and is working in it. But the inspiration which has animated such devotion did not transpire from the speeches made here to-day, nor from the voices that sang the "Internationale" at the climax of the programme. Over the centre of the stage hung a great red star, flanked to right and left with red banners. After the hymn the flags were unfurled and the words *All, Allen, Tutti*, came into view. The spelling was not all it might have been, but the meaning was clear: the star was to shine for everybody in the world! And the auditorium burst into spontaneous applause.

In fact, the hope of world revolution came most prominently to the fore during these three days of festivity. That slogan undoubtedly makes the strongest appeal, the appeal most enduring in freshness, least worn from use, that may be made to this State and its leaders, to this million of Communists now being energetically rounded out with manual labourers, and to the young people in the country at large. The war on the old Russia that filled the years of the Revolution down to 1920 has no longer any real meaning. The old Russia has been wiped out! On November 7th some ten thousand inscriptions were exhibited in public in honour of the day—on buildings, on spreads hung across the streets, on banners in the parades; and they decorated the numberless halls in which patriotic meetings took place. The vast majority of such displays spoke of the mission which the Soviet State had among all the peoples of the earth, and of the world conquest which its faith was to make.

In accord with a custom nine years old, numberless groups of workers "of hand and brain" filed past Lenin's tomb—
Moscow, early November, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

over a million in all. They paraded with floats, placards, caricatures, cartoons. Here, too, foreign policy supplied the majority of the subjects: countless the number of unflattering portraits of poor Mr. Chamberlain, and of the men prominent in the League of Nations. Another evidence that the interest of the populace is turned abroad in thought either of defence or of conquest in the name of the great Idea! Yet this year everything was more orderly, more courteous, less offensive. Tchitcherin will have no protesting from abroad as a result of these popular expressions on foreign policy!

The other outstanding feature of the demonstration was the strict discipline of the masses, and therefore, as it seemed to me, the decline in originality, in spontaneity. I noted much less singing, in fact hardly any singing at all. Jests at the expense of the chance bourgeois whom the parade encountered, during its progress of several hours through the city, were not so insulting or gross as five years ago. The march of the million factory workers followed a review of picked troops, such as might be seen in any country. After the Russian cavalry, riding in impeccable formation, came a brigade of Caucasian horsemen in the black, broad-shouldered hairy jackets traditional in their country; and my thoughts went back to the regiments that paraded here in 1921, badly armed, garbed, partly, in khaki uniforms confiscated from the British Relief, and neither brilliantly mounted nor cleverly handled. And yet, this time—nothing electric! Just discipline, organization, routine, perfect routine! In the evening the Caucasians again rode out of the Kremlin and manœuvred in the Red Square under a play of searchlights. "Stalin's Pretorians!" remarked one of those unfortunates whose sole surviving, and it would seem inalienable, right is to make a political jest from time to time at the expense of the Red Omnipotents. Yet, for myself, I could detect no trace of the romantic, nor even of the uncertain, in the magnificent clockwork of the Post-Revolution. Stalin does not want, or need, any Pretorians!

Mass organization, mass discipline, orderliness! But in the old days, all such celebrations had a very revolutionary, a very—despite Communist dogma—a very individual charm!

STALIN'S VICTORY

This time, at the official ceremonies in the "Bolshoi Theatre," one could note on the stage only the philosopher, Bukharin, of all the great figures of the great days. The rest were the familiar faces of the post-Lenin period, barring perhaps one—a much wilted cavalry general dating from the Civil Wars. Stalin sat in the front row behind the government table, half hidden by a great bronze candlestick. Only on repeated calls from the audience did he finally consent to utter a passing phrase: "Everything has been said!" But he holds the power in this country, a power far surpassing his authority as General Secretary of the dictating Party. This Jubilee might have centred about his person, as jubilees of the past centred around Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev. Instead, it had no centre, no head. The thousand invited guests who attended the official reception in the waiting-room of the Moscow Railroad Station might see a large photograph of the Politburo, with Stalin sitting in the middle of the front row. But the Moscow festivities methodically kept the Party in the background and threw the limelight on Soviet officialdom. The venerable Union president, Kalinin, rode out and in at the head of the troops. The balcony on the lintel of Lenin's tomb, in days gone by the pedestal of the Party leaders, was on this occasion a grand stand for the constitutional government proper.

This, then, was the "Soviet Jubilee," the national holiday of all Russians? Or was it that Stalin preferred not to provoke reminders of the man, the men, whose names the celebration inevitably suggested? The public had just learned with not a little astonishment of the bitter recrimination in which the quarrel in the Party had eventuated. So it was better to stress the State, rather than the Party that built it! On this very day of complacent retrospect Moscow saw Trotsky and his comrades in evil destiny barred from the Red Square and riding in overcrowded motor-cars about the streets near by, trying in vain to catch the ear of the multitudes. I shall never forget the bitterness that was written on Trotsky's face after hours of such futile effort.

Or perhaps the Party was avoiding the spotlight in a feeling of haughty pride: a feeling that it no longer needs to think *Moscow, early November, 1927*

SOVIET RUSSIA

of itself! Self-confident, sure of its success, it prefers that the homage be paid to its achievement!

The future will show just what the impersonality of this Jubilee hides!

EXPULSION FROM THE PARTY (November 15th, 1927.)

It has just been decided to publish a resolution adopted at a special sitting of the *Plenum* last Saturday. It expels Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Party.

Just why the news has been held up so long is not clear. It may have been due to the presence of so many guests in the capital during the week of the Jubilee. Most of them have now departed.

As regards the remaining twelve individuals of prominence in the Opposition, their appearance in public at the Jubilee ceremonies was protested before the Central Committee by the special Communist organizations to which they individually belong. They will at once be removed from their positions, along with Trotsky and Zinoviev (Radek is already without a post). Their cases will be considered at the coming Party Congress. In view of the composition of that body as a result of the last elections, there can be no doubt that they also will be expelled from the Party.

One consequence, among others, of the present decision, will be that Kamenev, the Soviet ambassador to Italy, at present in Moscow, will not return to Rome. The names of such world-famous persons as Radek and Rakovski seem also to have been on the expulsion list; and one might add Smilga and Yevdunikov, both men who have done much for the economic reconstruction of the Soviet State; and a number of "old Bolsheviks" who have been members of the Party for twenty years or more.

Direct and final expulsion was voted only against Trotsky and Zinoviev. The fact gives some ground for believing that the Party leadership may still be seeking a basis for compromise with the rest of the Opposition, or at least a formula whereby these gentlemen can submit and make obeisance with dignity. The tactic would correspond with the policy

STALIN'S VICTORY

the Majority has followed ever since it became clear that the Opposition would not agree to being silenced. In fact, ever since last autumn, the Majority has tried every possible device to bring the Opposition to terms. Important diplomatic posts were offered to some of the more important individuals. Others were invited to high positions in the Party, whence they could exert their influence on the Party's policy in more "regular" form. I have already mentioned the relative freedom of speech that was accorded the group, generally, last August. Nothing availed, however, to prevent the complete and dramatic break which, after all, has been taken for granted since midsummer.

In personal terms the expulsion means for its victims a loss of their present means of livelihood, and, in some cases, of free lodgings in the Kremlin. The bitterness and doggedness of the struggle on both sides may mean imprisonment for most of them as the crisis wears on. These men, it should be noted, have been willing to sacrifice the political and personal positions they have been enjoying all along, and have placed themselves quite deliberately in a very difficult situation. That fact would imply that they have fought a long and losing fight for things which they believe to be of capital importance, things that concern the very nature of the structure which they have helped so materially to build.

It is said that the Majority sought to the very last to keep Trotsky and Zinoviev in the Party. Even the bitterest antagonists of the Opposition realize what those two names (and not only those two) mean for the prestige of the Party both at home and abroad. The negotiations were long protracted and fairly cool-headed and objective. It is reported that at the end Trotsky and Zinoviev scornfully and bluntly rejected the conditions that were laid down for them. The detail would lend some colour to rumours that have been current for a long time, and which not a few Party members took seriously: that the Opposition was bent on founding a "second Party."

Such a plan would seem hardly in keeping with the theoretical atmosphere in which the Opposition has been moving. The leaders have long been convinced defenders of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and they have been reaping

November 15th, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

profits from that theory. Such a dictatorship cannot be exercised with two parties in the field!

The fight has more probably been directed against the preponderance of the bureaucracy in the Party, which especially Trotski has consistently accused of stifling the political development of the Party as a whole. What the Opposition wanted was a revitalization of the Party in a sense which they called "democratic." Hence the sharpness of their contrast with General Secretary Stalin, who had given the Party a "Machine," a "stiff organization" concentrated absolutely in his own hands.

The Opposition, to use their own words, "broke their backs on the Machine." But one could not say that their battle has been fruitless. Many of their ideas have been taken over by the Minority, the economic and the political fields. That the personal influence of the sponsors of those ideas did not increase one whit on that account may be set down as one of the causes for their gradual resort to extreme measures "to spring the lids on their coffins." After all the Opposition counted many thousands of supporters toward the end, not to say tens of thousands. How many secret sympathizers they may have had in the Party is, of course, a matter of conjecture. All the dissatisfied elements, on one point or another, stood with them. In spite of everything, however, they were in an undoubted minority. They were just strong enough to force the Party leaders to concessions which were gradually endangering the effective and logical exercise of government. An indisputable example of this would be the "seven hour day," proclaimed on the occasion of the Jubilee, and certainly a paradox, in view of the economic situation. This measure turns to the advantage of the factory workers, especially of the unskilled and unorganized classes, among whom the Opposition found particular support. The Majority had reason to fear that it would be more and more exposed to pressure as a result of the Opposition's agitation, and that it would soon be unable to function effectively in transacting public business. A statesman like Stalin must surely have concluded that the suppression of the Opposition was a necessity of State.

STALIN'S VICTORY

Individuals accused to the Party Congress have the right to defend themselves before that body. We may be sure that the movement begun by the Opposition will be pushed, now that they have burned their bridges behind them, to the extreme limits of resistance.

The general tendency of Soviet domestic policy will not be altered by the expulsion of the Opposition. On the other hand, it is not impossible that the Party leaders will take advantage of their future freedom from the Opposition's criticism, to apply those measures which they may deem best calculated to relieve the serious situation in foreign policy.

How completely, meantime, the Opposition has been crushed remains an open question, though a very important one for the future of the Party. The present victory of the Majority has been won too exclusively on a basis of force to be regarded as final.

CHAPTER III

END OF THE OPPOSITION

WHAT THE OPPOSITION WANTED (Moscow, November, 1927.)

A pamphlet called "A Project for a Platform of Leninist Bolshevism" may be had in Germany to-day for one shilling and sixpence. Its sale is still strictly forbidden in the Soviet Union. Since the Opposition came forward in sharp conflict with the Majority, its objectives have remained a great mystery both in Russia and abroad. At last its complaints and demands have been made public property.

To Europeans generally the "Project" reads like a lament for the past: "Back to the Revolution"! Every page, every line points a finger at "the great betrayal": compromise with bourgeoisism in thought; worse compromise with bourgeois elements in town and country; retreat before the great and difficult problems posed by the "continuing Revolution"!

The weakness of the platform, in my judgment, is that it indeed promises a revolutionary future, if . . . ; but that actually it shows how the years since, and even before, Lenin's death, have been controlled by a "fire on the Left" policy, so-called, of Stalin. The book sounds to our ears like a dirge over lost illusions, a lost paradise, the end of a dream. One could not think of it as poetry, exactly; yet it does portray, and vividly, the anguish of a strong will that feels power slipping from its grasp—the tragedy of all revolutions, and of all men called by fate to serve them!

This characterization of mine would probably satisfy neither the Opposition nor the Majority. The Opposition, because they still arduously yearn for power and claim the right to power. Twice they say quite plainly: "Everything can still be adjusted!" The Majority "sitting tight" on their throne will insist just as emphatically that, despite the slanders of

END OF THE OPPOSITION

the Opposition, they are "good proletarians" and "good revolutionists."

We could easily grant this contention. Comparatively speaking—the comparison would be with conditions under capitalism—the Revolution in Russia is still under full headway. But it is nevertheless true that the radicalism of the Opposition partakes much more markedly of the straightforward resoluteness of those first years, 1918, 1919, 1920 when the Great Idea was exchanging its first blows with realities. To us the differences between these "brethren in Lenin," who are clawing each other's flesh with such zest, seem insignificant indeed. And so they seem to the properly worried Nepman in Russia, to the "intellectual" in his quiet corner, to the wealthy peasant—all people who know Russia at first hand. However, these sometime comrades in victorious Bolshevism see an impassable gulf between them. *They* certainly know what causes it—that much must be conceded them!

Foreign countries have a practical interest in understanding the schism between Majority and Opposition; for the conflict is destined to determine the future course of events in Russia. Let us take the agrarian question.

The Opposition are afraid of the "rich" peasant. All of a sudden, at some unexpected moment, he may seize power over the country. They quote statistics to show that the *kulak* is disproportionately favoured in the distribution of real property in the country, and that he is strengthening his position: in the year 1926, 6 per cent. of the peasantry owned 58 per cent. of the tillable areas. This means that the nationalization of land is being undermined! War, therefore, on the *kulak*, who, by his control over rentings of livestock and seed, is bringing the poor and moderately wealthy farmer more and more under his lash! The poor and "middling" peasants must be pushed into positions of authority, organized in co-operatives, and relieved as to taxation; while the *kulak* pays the piper. The *kulak*, in particular, must be made to give over 10 per cent. of his surplus wheat (90 million poods). The most important task is to provide the peasants with an adequate supply of manufactured products.

In the industrialization policy, however, the "Project"
Moscow, November, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

laments the absence of the necessary resoluteness. Only through an energetic increase in the supply of manufactures will it be possible to lower prices sufficiently to "close the scissors"—in other words, to remedy the scandalous disproportion between the prices of manufactured articles and the prices of agricultural products. Neither the measures devised hitherto, nor the Five Years' Plan of the Régime for the development of industry, are adequate for that. The draft of the "Soviet Planning Commission" foresees an average increase, down to 1931, of only from 4 to 9 per cent. (that is about the increase in rapidly expanding capitalistic countries). Where, then, ask the Opposition, are the advantages which the Socialist Revolution has brought to the present economic system? Meantime, "personal" consumption of manufactured goods is to increase only some 12 per cent.; in other words, it will fail in many cases to reach pre-War levels. Very interesting figures! Russia will remain for a long time still a very "uncomfortable country"! It would take us too far afield to go into other criticism—the Opposition's comment, for example, on the "fantastic" retail prices at present prevailing; or on the plan to build down to 1931 only (a very Russian "only") four or five thousand miles of railways.

Very logically, the "Project" next goes on to the relations between Soviet business and foreign business. It will be possible, it points out, to protect the growth of Soviet business only provided there be a fair approximation between domestic prices and foreign prices. Exports from the Soviet Union are in arrears of general business development to an extent calculated to cause grave concern. The Union is at present handling less than 1 per cent. (0.97 per cent.) of world business. If Soviet prosperity is to improve, the support of earnings in the export field is absolutely essential. An isolated Socialist development is purely fanciful. "No domestic policy is in itself able to free us from the dangers of encirclement by the capitalistic countries."

This clearly indicates that the Opposition believe a radical domestic policy is quite compatible with a rapprochement with the bourgeois world. Stalin's policy holds the two to be

END OF THE OPPOSITION

incompatible. The Opposition therefore would take advantage of the Foreign Trade Monopoly, of concessions, of foreign credits, while calling for a "redistribution" of national income at home. This, only ten years after the Communist Revolution! In their opinion, the Nepman and the *Kulak* gorge on the disparity between the ends of the "scissors." Then—"Mobilization of private savings"! and "Tax reform"! And very sharp words on the importance the public sale of liquors is having in the Budget, as in the old days! And emphatic strictures on the revival of individualist economics as exemplified in *kulak* and "Nepman"; and on the remissness of the State in failing to make war on such people.

Just as vigorous the criticisms of the management of the Soviet system and of the Party by the present holders of power, notably Stalin! Here, in fact, the Opposition strike their shrillest note, in memory, alas, of the Lost Paradise! Just before the October Revolution Lenin had said with Marx: "Under the Socialist system, the office holder ceases to be a bureaucrat." That the Soviet State is one of the most bureaucratic of governments everybody knows, in spite of Lenin's eagerness "to attract all people of talent into co-partnership in leading the State." The Opposition question whether Stalin's bureaucracy be serving the Socialist state with reference to the latter's goal. This the Opposition demands; and the platform of 1917 is again rehearsed. As for the constitution of the Party, "in proportion as democracy languishes in the Party, democracy declines among the workers in the factories and in all non-Party organizations of labour." Bureaucratic routine is throttling principles!

The "Project" distinguishes three main currents, or "wings," inside the Party:

A Right wing would base its policy on the "middling" peasants, peasants of moderate means hardly to be separated from the *kulaks*. Here we find Kalinin and Rykov, and non-Party people such as Professor Kondratiev (little Rykovs and Kondratievs are to be found everywhere in Russia).

A "Centre" would be represented by Stalin and the
Moscow, November, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

Stalinists, who are trying "to replace the Party with themselves." They are supported by tens of thousands of office-holders of all kinds, many thousands among them being counted as "good" Bolsheviks, who are sincerely labouring for Communism. The group, however, contains a stripe of "genuine bureaucrats" who stand quite apart from the masses. These people "look at the Party from the top down," and are fighting the Left.

This Left would be the Opposition itself, which Stalin is trying "to lop off" on the pretext that its aim is to found a second Party. The platform outlined in the "Project" is the platform of the Left.

The radical colouring of the platform is further enhanced in the demands which the Opposition put forward for intensifying the activity of the Komintern toward World Revolution and for "purifying" the Communist Youth movement and the Army "of petty-bourgeois elements." This radicalism is most interestingly reflected in a paragraph entitled "Danger of War," and dealing particularly with Germany. "The more fully German diplomacy has developed during recent months, the clearer it becomes that Germany is 'looking West'"; and nothing could be more harmful "than to close one's eyes to this change of front." It is to be taken for granted that France, Japan, the United States (as the hinterland of capitalistic Europe), and of course England will, in a given case, make war upon the Soviet Union. Opposition and Majority are both agreed that war with the capitalistic world is only a question of time. The Opposition, however, insist that "the imperialistic war be transformed into a civil war in all countries" and, as against "the Majority of little faith," look forward to a "revolutionary morrow in Europe."

THE OPPOSITION'S SUPPORT (Moscow, December, 1927.)

Ever since Latchevitch's meeting in the woods (1926 summer), and the sudden appearance of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Radek at the meeting in the factory at Moscow (October, 1926), the Opposition has been driven step by step from posts of influence in the Party, and now stands on the Tarpeian

END OF THE OPPOSITION

Rock for its final plunge into the oblivion of the "Partyless." Yet one may well ask whether, in exchange for its many misfortunes, it has not won a considerable success in the form of a progressive organization of its forces. The fact that the leaders of a movement fall into disgrace for having led it by no means proves the movement itself a failure. The hints which Yaroslavski and Bukharin have recently let fall as to the extent and effectiveness of the agitation of their antagonists suggest that during the past year the Opposition has attained much greater bulk. That manifold, discovered in Granatny Street in Moscow, which sent such a large number of the Opposition scurrying from Party and Central Committee, should probably be looked upon as a scapegoat for a large number of similar machines which were not discovered! There are indications of financial means, of a widely expanded organization, of a general growth of the Opposition as a whole. A danger at which the Majority cannot just snap its fingers, if things have gone so far in a bare year!

What, then, is the structure of this wide-spread movement? It has often been remarked that the leaders of the Opposition have been standard-bearers of "intellectual" revolutionism. However, the first "addresses" bore the signatures of "old" Bolsheviks dating from before 1917, and the larger portion of these were factory workers. These latter must be regarded as the kernel of the Opposition, a nucleus not so heavily varnished over with "intellectualism" and "Europeanism"! How large a portion of the Party is concentrated in this kernel it would be difficult to guess. It is too great, evidently, for the nuisance to be simply suppressed by the Majority! The Opposition stubbornly asserts that the votings in the Party committees are being falsely reported through alterations in the figures favourable to it.

Why such rapid progress for the Opposition, among factory workers not belonging to the Party? These are proletarians, to be sure; but, as compared with the workers belonging to the Party (some 600,000, all told), they occupy a secondary position in this proletarian Régime. They know nothing of the inner doings of the Party which actually rules their State. They number perhaps three millions, to-day. The fact that

Moscow, December, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

employment by the State is open to them is not adequate compensation. The whole Soviet system is just a tool—a magnificent tool—in the hands of the Party. The non-Party proletarian thinks of himself as participating in power in the Soviet State. He is encouraged and taught to think of himself in those terms. At the same time he can only too often observe that he is simply being used.

After Trotsky's expulsion from the Party, meetings were spontaneously held in almost all the factories in Moscow and Leningrad, and the debates were animated, the non-Party workers manifesting a lively interest in the fate of Trotsky and Zinoviev. Trotsky and his friends came forward not merely as convinced revolutionists. With a shrewd eye on their audience, they posed as champions and defenders of the proletarians as a class, not merely of Party proletarians.

All this threatens to checkmate Stalin's policy of compromise between city and country.

BANISHMENT TO THE PROVINCES

(Moscow, January 6th, 1928.)

On January 3rd, thirty prominent leaders of the Opposition were notified by the State Police (the G.P.U.) that they were to be sent to different out-of-the-way regions in European and Asiatic Russia, and that they should prepare to leave within three days. The next morning similar notices were served on the highest chiefs of the Opposition, if not in the same language, at least to the same effect. They were invited in the name of the Party to leave Moscow; most important among them, Trotsky, Muralov, Rakovski, and Radek; and also the two "penitents," Kamenev and Zinoviev.

In Trotsky's case Astrakhan was recommended, a town on the Caspian Sea, smelling to heaven of fish at all times of the year, and a blazing furnace in summer. Rakovski was shown a point of the map somewhere in the Viatka government—it is four hundred miles, more or less, from the nearest railroad. Radek was offered a nest in the Siberian government of Tobolsk, and Serebriakov a village in the Semipalatinsk, also to be looked for on the map of Central Asia. Kamenev will reside in Tobolsk itself. Zinoviev will return to familiar

END OF THE OPPOSITION

haunts on the plateaus of the Urals. So all the names in the Opposition which have hitherto counted will be sprinkled about the boundless inhospitality of this boundless land of Russia, from Archangel to Astrakhan, from the Urals to uttermost Siberia and the Semipalatinsk.

From the point of view of history, this is the most extraordinary spectacle so far produced by the Russian Revolution. These men are the men who first stirred up the Revolution and then led it as few others could have done. Out of that Revolution they reared the State which is now sending them into desert wastes. Some of them stood closest to Lenin during the critical years. Among them are individuals of great achievement in the economic field, and others whom the young State held up as representative before foreign countries—the ambassadors Rakovski, fifty-six years old, and Kamenev. Serebriakov was the man who first established connections between Soviet industry and the Americas, in the course of a voyage that was famous in its day. On the prescribed list is the name of Sosnovski, a newspaper writer of great intelligence and courage. His articles in the Soviet Press voiced the freest criticisms heard in Russia of life under the Soviets, a life that undoubtedly has its cruel aspects. Smirnov, down to his fall, a few months ago, on charges of opposition, was Minister of Posts. During recent weeks he has been an assiduous visitor at the Labour Exchange—he was by trade a metal worker. Then one notes a more sinister figure, Beloborodov, once Minister of the Interior in the Russian Federation, and, by nation-wide repute, the “executioner of the Tsar.” One notes Sapronov, once high in the Supreme Economic Council; Satev, leader of the “little Opposition”; Smilga, former editor of the Leningrad *Pravda*; then Radek; then Trotski, hero of heroes in the Revolution, the “man of October and Kronstadt,” sometime Foreign Minister, and later War Minister, of the Soviet Union; as orator and debater without a peer—in his day he even overshadowed Lenin!

All these individuals, it must be said, have for some time past—since their expulsion from the Party and the loss of all their posts—been short of money, if not in actual want; or

SOVIET RUSSIA

else obliged to accept any kind of work. Too many details have become known for any doubt to be left on that point. It is a matter of interest to them all that the seventeen kopeks a day in pocket-money that were allowed to the Tsar are no longer paid to exiles of the Soviet system! The majority of the victims are working men, but their list also includes men of cosmopolitan culture and rare talents for politics and statesmanship. They are again to tread paths which they have already trodden under the Tsars (or would have trodden had they been captured). Their number counts revolutionists who have fought for thirty years in the Party: Smirnov!

They must all be experiencing an unearthly feeling akin to madness! To have prepared, led, and served the greatest Revolution in history, with no different personal fortunes than if they had fought against the Revolution or done worse! The same result for them as if the Old Régime had come off victorious! History offers few ironies as bitter or as cruel as this: that, at the end of life-long battling under two systems of government, the one which they destroyed and the other which they led to victory, the same reward should be their lot: submersion in Siberia! Many of them must sadly reflect that the Soviet State has made up for what the Tsar was never able to do to them!

Europe looks on at the spectacle in indifferent curiosity. It may seem to us that while we are talking about the "permanence of the Revolution," the bone of contention between Trotski and Stalin, a few words might be devoted to the "permanence of Siberia" as the sum and substance of an attitude toward political opponents which seems ineradicable on Russian soil.

The "Thirty of the Opposition" who have been so ruthlessly arrested have the consolation of knowing the cause of their misfortune. They are going into exile because of "counter-Revolution"! Counter-Revolution! That charge, that simple charge, has served, with their approval, in numberless cases during the past ten years, as adequate basis for "administrative liquidation." They probably know what the word means! For that matter they have seen their own "administrative liquidation" approaching for some months

END OF THE OPPOSITION

past. Certainly, a year and a half ago, when the Opposition, a small but brilliant group, began their fight on "Stalin's tyrannical system," they believed it impossible—and the world agreed with them—that the enterprise would end first in their expulsion from the Party and finally in their banishment from Russia. But in October, 1926, the Opposition were compelled to make obeisance in due form. The episode must have shown them that their battle was a desperate one. Shortly thereafter it became apparent to everyone in Moscow that they would have reason to fear for their personal freedom if they continued "disrupting the Party." Stalin had made up his mind to close the issue, as early as last August; but his attack miscarried. The Opposition regarded the breathing space they then won as a reprieve from the gallows. They fought on with all the resource at their disposal. The coming Party Congress would be decisive! It would be a congress of office-holders; but even if the programme of the Opposition got as few as thirty thousand votes, such a showing could not be overlooked when the fate of the leaders came to be determined. As the event proved, only seven thousand individuals chose to put their signatures to that "subscription to personal inconvenience," and twelve hundred of those were "intellectuals."! Europe is inclined too readily to forget that the Opposition was primarily a group of "has-beens" from among the "old" Bolsheviki and factory workers. The expulsion followed as a matter of course. It was a question of convicting the Opposition of having done everything conceivable in the way of disloyalty to the Party, breach of discipline, contempt for tradition, which they could possibly have done in the few brief months at their disposal between August and December!

They were accused, among other things, of attempting to found a second Party. That is absurd. The men of the Opposition at all times were trying simply to break through the invisible walls that had been separating them from the Party for years. Their effort at all times was to get their views known, and, thereafter, as a further consequence, to get back the influence which Stalin had "organized out of their hands." From the beginning on, their policy was planned for a future

Moscow, January 6th, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

more or less distant; and it discounted great personal risks and the chances of severe defeats at first. They clung to this tactic, in the face of their expulsion and down to the present moment. They foresaw that all this would be necessary, if they were to find the rank-and-file of the Party wholly on their side when the course of events proved their predictions sound and their policies indispensable. They regarded the coming of such a moment as inevitable. The important thing, at that moment, would be to show that they had never weakened in their convictions. It was a win-or-lose tactic, with heavy stakes—a very “revolutionary” tactic, though the banishments to Siberia now suggest that it may have been a miscalculation. Can it be that “revolutionary” tactics work no better in the revolutionary Russia of to-day than they did under the Old Régime?

It has been said that this “high play” of the Opposition, and especially Trotsky’s *Aut Cæsar aut nihil*, were prompted more than anything else by an ambition to recover an unforgettable power. One cannot read what is in the hearts of other people. Certainly the Opposition fought as hard as they fought for the reason, among others, that they believed nothing short of catastrophe could be foreseen if things continued going as they had been going. They foresaw the peasant becoming all-powerful in business and in the State and then, some day, overthrowing the proletarian dictatorship. They demanded “greater guarantees” for the Revolution, an effective fortification of proletarian interests through the development of Soviet industry. Otherwise they prophesied a “twilight of the gods.” They fought in all earnestness to forestall such disasters, and when they had been expelled from the Party they frankly informed the Party leaders that they would fight on.

A first impression may find it paradoxical that in a proletarian State such a programme could lead to banishment on charges of counter-revolution, and to secret banishments, at that; for, to this moment, not a word of all this has leaked out into the Russian Press.

The Party Majority, or, to use a shorter word, Stalin, claimed, successfully claimed, that the Opposition had become “unteachable,” and “insufferable”—that they were under-

END OF THE OPPOSITION

mining the Party by their activities. In the interests of the Party at large, their criticisms and their agitation could no longer be tolerated. It would be idle, in the circumstances, to ask whether the Dictatorship in Soviet Russia, in spite of the democratic elements in its make-up, is not, after all, too inflexible to admit of discussion within it. But by its present procedure, which cannot fail to have a most painful effect upon the Party, the Majority is admitting something which it has all along denied: that the Opposition was gaining ground, and that certain effects, in many ways intangible, and which the Majority was beginning to find dangerous, if not to itself, at least to its freedom of action, were directly attributable to the Opposition. It is to-day impossible to establish in terms of fact just how far-reaching these effects, both deliberate and involuntary, were. Neither camp can be certain on such points. The one indisputable thing is that Stalin wanted no more discussion! Intolerance, cry his enemies! The absolutism of a man sure of his power, who will have no one else beside him!

Stalin, however, might answer that the Party is still in process of inner development, that the heterogeneous and variously accidental elements which compose it must first be smelted into organic unity. Since Lenin's death, a period of barely four years, 800,000 new members have been taken into a Party with a total membership of 1,200,000. What a transformation! These new accretions have never seen Trotski in action. They must be "shaped"—they must be "worked over," in large part, by Party officials, if they are to become a solid foundation for the State. The officials themselves are not all that could be desired. In large majority they date not from the Revolution but from the post-Revolution. They are so much raw-material, enthusiastic, but untrained, often ignorant. Such the Party, nay the ruling-class in embryo, which the Opposition would involve in an intricate debate on fundamentals!

In the measures which Stalin has taken against the theoretical attack of the "old-timers," one may sense the working of that dry but steel-hard practicalness, that stoical realism, with which he, a man by no means brilliant, so rarely frivolous

SOVIET RUSSIA

and often so repulsive, has managed to organize his "monolithic" Party, at the same time manipulating numberless delicate adjustments of interest between town and country, between peasant and factory-worker, a fabric for building which the Opposition now chides him and which it would sweep away with one stroke of the hand.

Not only concern for the Party's welfare is inclining Stalin to cling to the guiding lines he happens to hold in his grasp. At the present moment the figures for Soviet grain are falling off alarmingly. Purchases of grain abroad will again be necessary. In spite of all efforts to win the peasants over, they remain cool. The interests of industry and of the factory workers are directly opposite to theirs. Collective contracts with agriculture for securing food for the cities and for the Army are being negotiated with the greatest difficulty, if at all. The Opposition predicted that the situation would shape up in very much these terms; and so far as the factory workers are concerned the agitation has contributed to accentuating tension. But in these circumstances more than ever, Stalin feels that Party unity and public quiet must be guaranteed, and that he may well recognize in his acts a danger from opposition which he minimizes in his words.

The exile of the Opposition to Siberia will broaden and deepen the gulf between Communist Russia and bourgeois Europe. It throws a vivid light upon a world that is incomprehensible to us, a world which very few of us try to understand or care to understand. After all, this country has changed but little since the days of Catharine the Great. That lady wrote very laudable maxims to illustrious men in Europe, but at home she followed a different counsel—perhaps because she had to. However, we of the West cannot escape a feeling that out of all the painful convulsions which present-day Russia is allowing us to see and especially to foresee, a new world is being born. But the spasms themselves do not seem on that account any the less dreadfully and dangerously strange to us.

FINAL TOUCHES

(Moscow, January 14th, 1928.)

The day before yesterday it was finally decided that, barring

END OF THE OPPOSITION

unforeseen contingencies and on the authority of Article 58 of the Soviet Penal Code (Counter-revolution), Trotski will be sent to Vierny on the frontier between China and Turkestan. He is to leave Monday evening. In accord with the same article, Rakovski is banished to Astrakhan, Radek, Preobrazhenski and some others will start Sunday evening for the Headquarters of the G.P.U. in the Urals, where they will await further orders—some change has apparently been made in their destinations. Serebriakov, famous for his trip to America and his extensive activities in Soviet oil, is already on his way to Semipalatinsk. Kamenev will settle at Penza, Zinoviev at Tambov—points in European Russia relatively accessible to Moscow. Some fifty Oppositionists were sent off early last week, under direct application of Article 58: so Smilga to Nariev, North Siberia, and Sapronov to “a similar place of exile.” Numerous banishments have also taken place in the rural centres.

There has been some delay in making final disposition of the more prominent leaders, because their banishments originally took the form of “appointments” to various “missions” on behalf of the Party, though nothing definite was made known as to the nature of the “missions.” To this they objected. Their tactic was to force frank acknowledgment of the true character of their treatment. They named the conditions under which they would leave Moscow of their own free will: certain kinds of work; a certain kind of escort; certain destinations only; and equal treatment for everybody, either as “Party-workers” or as exiles.

To these remonstrances and stipulations the Central Committee answered through the G.P.U. and, in some cases at least, by increasing the severity of the original sentences. This is especially true for Trotski. He has now been ordered to a very remote spot in Asiatic Russia, though probably the environment will prove more salubrious for him than Astrakhan, now designated as the residence of Rakovski.

This brings all the prominent leaders of the Opposition under Article 58 and under the G.P.U. In accord with this change they have each signed the certificates of arrest required by G.P.U. regulations. Trotski, however, refused to appear

SOVIET RUSSIA

at Police Headquarters and was allowed to sign at home. Other exceptions were Zinoviev and Kamenev. After their expulsion, they made declarations of absolute obedience to the Party, and they seem not to have lost contact altogether with the Party leaders. Their sentences, meantime, have been sensibly mitigated. Special consideration has been shown some other individuals on grounds of health.

Although the first orders were issued fully ten days ago, the newspapers are observing the strictest silence on this latest phase of the struggle between Opposition and Majority. All decisions have been made in a very narrow circle. However, that things would come to this pass has been known for a much longer time to both parties—to the more important men, at least.

In foreign countries this Draconian severity will be regarded as a final and irremediable break between Opposition and Majority, as a radical split in the Party; and all sorts of fairy stories will grow out of such an exciting spectacle. More prudent critics will await developments. In spite of the harshness of the Party leaders, there is a certain elasticity in the sentences. At times they seemed to be considering the physical suppression of their antagonists. However, the far larger number of the outstanding Oppositionists will be allowed at least to exist in remote spots in the distant East, whither they are now bound in sleeping-cars, so far as possible, accompanied each by a trooper and with a sum equivalent to five guineas in their pockets as expense money. The Party leaders have sought to be rid of the inner circle of the Opposition with the greatest show of leniency practicable. Even if the Opposition have done their best to represent the orders of which they are victims in the worst possible light, and have succeeded in doing so by stubborn and cold-blooded obstructionism, the Majority still remains under obligation, in harmony with its previous efforts, to interpret the banishments as "assignments" to "congenial" work in the Party's interest.

DEMEANOUR OF THE EXILES
(Moscow, January 14th, 1928.)

Much more interesting is the attitude of the men of
200 *Moscow, January 14th, 1928*

END OF THE OPPOSITION

the Opposition. One must not forget that they might have resorted to physical force, not only through resistance in person but by appealing to their followers in the shops, the high schools, and other public institutions. They did not do that. It would, to be sure, have been of no avail; yet nothing more harmful could have happened to the Majority.

As a matter of fact, a deeper loyalty to the Party dissuaded the Opposition from any extreme recourse. They know that in the ultimate, the highest ideals, they are at one with the Party. That fact has determined their policy all along. Historical parallels throw no light on this case. One might think of that "suicide of everything revolutionary" which marked the end of the French Revolution. But in this Russian case, the struggle, despite its bitterness on both sides, remained a "family" affair. Opponents belaboured each other with a violence which in a less sturdy climate might have meant general annihilation. But they felt themselves united in substantial things and in a common foe. At the critical moments they refrained from doing anything which, in its further consequences, might have endangered the existence of their State. The Opposition has of course so far been making the greater sacrifice; but the whole episode shows what great inner vitality the Party still possesses.

It may well be that, with a persistence, and in a spirit, which might seem somewhat gruesome to tamer regions of the world, the Opposition are thinking of a future "beyond Siberia"; for Siberia, with all the connotations that linger about the name, must, for these eternal and incorrigible revolutionaries, be the appropriate symbol of a near and certain reversal of fortune. They are reflecting that the clash between town and country which they have been predicting seems to be already on the horizon. The peasants are holding back their produce. During the month of December only 36,000 tons of merchandise, all told, were exported from Russian harbours. There are other symptoms of rural stagnation. In the towns, meantime, there are shortages in many commodities. The Opposition are probably flattering themselves that they have been sent away because they were right, too

SOVIET RUSSIA

right ; and they are convinced, and not they only, that " something is bound to happen " ! An economic crisis is in the offing. It may have political repercussions. The Majority can go to the Right, but will the factory workers follow ? Have they not been too much affected by the views of the Opposition to be " taken along " without protest ? Will they just stand and look on while the Nepman and the " rich " ambitious peasant go soaring on high ? The Nepman and the " rich " peasant stand together and work together. They may relieve the stoppage in overturn, but will they not ask for their share in power ?

Or the Majority can go to the Left, come down upon the rural districts with all the " legal and administrative " means at its disposal—such means are numerous and effective in Russia ! Already, in fact, certain measures have been taken by the government which suggest that the Party is turning " toward the Left. " But in that case the Opposition would be justified, and the logical consequence, as they hope, would be a " democratic initiative in the Party " !

Since " something is bound to happen " in view of the economic and political difficulties that are now swarming on every hand, there is a chance for the men at present in disgrace in both directions, to the Left and to the Right ! Either a gradual shift by way of the Right to the Left, where the Opposition stands, or an abrupt swing of the pendulum to the Left. To the Left they are convinced the Party must go in any event.

The reasoning is sound enough. But there are other elements in the situation : the administrative efficiency of the Soviet " Machine, " as the latter has been developed in recent years ; and the discipline of the Party as an organization. Over the course of a decade the Party has surmounted difficulties not less complex than those of the present moment without " decisions on fundamentals. " The " Machine " of the government and of the Party has been running so smoothly in Stalin's hands, its bureaucratic mechanism is perhaps so well co-ordinated, that he may not be obliged to give the first word on the present complicated situation to politics, but may on the contrary solve it by " mere routine. " The important question from the Oppositional point of view is

END OF THE OPPOSITION

whether political issues are to come to the fore during these next months. That is the only question to which they can pin their hopes after this old-style Russian disaster that has fallen upon them.

For Europe the important thing is that in spite of the paradoxical forms to which this struggle over policy and leadership has led, the Soviet State has preserved its essential character intact, and will continue to do so.

INTERVIEW WITH TROTSKI

(Moscow, January 15th, 1928.)

So far as the passing glance can discern, there is nothing to show that this man is being watched, that he has been branded as a danger to the State and to the future of Communism, that to-morrow he is to set out on a long journey from which he cannot be sure he will ever return.

He lives in one of those large, attractive apartment houses which the Revolution, years ago, took over as residences for its leaders. It is the second one he has occupied since he left the Kremlin. All the rooms and halls are cluttered with boxes, trunks, cases. You understand at once that people are moving out! Books, books, books! The natural food of revolutionaries, much as ox-blood was the food of the Spartans!

Years of silence toward the bourgeois world, partly as a matter of compulsion, partly as a matter of tactics, of choice! Has that world so soon forgotten what the man looks like—Trotsky, the villain in so many bourgeois bed-time stories, the man who led the Russian Revolution and shared with Lenin that extravagant popularity which is never more impressive and never more ephemeral than in revolutions? A middling sized individual, with a girlishly tender skin, a yellowish complexion, eyes not so very large, of a blue that seems frequently to sparkle. Their gaze is steady. They can even take on a friendly softness. The forehead is high and full of expression, suggesting now strength, now spirituality. The mouth is small on the scale of the ample face. The hands too are small, soft, feminine—his one, his only, resemblance to Napoleon!

This man, in his time, improvised great armies. He took
Moscow, January 15th, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

humble factory workers and lowly peasants, filled them with an exaltation that lifted them far above their mental levels, and then bound them to himself with indissoluble ties of affection! Then he vanished for a time down the rabbit-hole of clandestine agitation! At this moment he is shy, and a little embarrassed—he refers to the disorder in his apartment, and such things. Perhaps that is what makes him so attractive! The contrast impresses me, at any rate—I cannot get it off my mind. This man is trying to be pleasant in a polite conversation with a person he has met only once before. At the same time, he is a fighter to the last ditch!

After some manœuvring we came to topics which from my point of view were strictly routine. I remarked that Lloyd George had prophesied a Napoleonic future for him. Trotsky has a light, half-giggling titter that easily comes to his lips. This time the laugh was heartier. "A funny idea that I should ever be the tail end of a Revolution! But that isn't the only time Lloyd George has been wrong!" And he went on to recall how often people abroad had been mistaken, or had pretended to be mistaken, as to his ideas.

Then suddenly he asked what I thought the prospects for a general revolution in Europe were. I could only return the question. The oratorical manner comes natural to Trotsky. He easily slips from the conversational tone. He started with a broad survey. In 1923 the revolutionary wave had reached a very considerable height, especially in Germany. Since that time it had been receding by degrees. He sketched the movement with a graceful, almost musical undulation of his arm and hand. Now it was turning. It would rise again. The "boom" in European business was ending. Everywhere people were feeling the limitations drawn about them, the lack of elbow-room. This would affect the lower classes especially. The working man was more critically-minded than ever before—he was thinking thoughts that in days gone by never would have occurred to him. The next elections in Europe would show a swing to the Left, toward Social Democracy. "It will probably stop there!" said Trotsky with a gesture expressing a flash of discomfort that suddenly intruded upon his jovial mood. "And yet, the Communists

END OF THE OPPOSITION

are winning votes—for example, in Germany.” The Social Democrats would in the long run be unable to stem the tide to the Left! It would flood over them into Communism!

I adverted to the importance of the trend toward the Left in England, as indicating perhaps a *détente* in Anglo-Russian relations. Trotsky laughed lightly. He was by no means certain that a Labour government with a Liberal tinge in England would choose to establish closer bonds with Russia. He did find it very natural that Germany should be eager for such a thing.

The conversation turned on the rôle of the United States in Europe. Trotsky thought that developments in domestic policies in Europe very largely depended on the attitude of the United States. It was his impression that in Germany, after a period of unlimited enthusiasm for the Americans which began in 1924, there was now greater scepticism as to American intentions, as to the Dawes Plan, credits, and business prospects, and as to Germany's future in connection with all those questions. Trotsky has an eye open for friction between the bourgeois countries before long. But in such remarks the irrepressible revolutionist was plainly speaking. His personal fate seemed quite forgotten.

A “comrade” entered the room—he was starting that evening for his place of exile. He had come to see whether he could do anything for Trotsky. Trotsky's face, with the short-cut chin-beard, wrinkled into a gay smile: “I take it you are starting on your vacation to-day!” The ironical debater, unable to let an opportunity pass! The “intellectual,” whose mind is always playing with antitheses! The good humour of the man whom nothing can stagger!

I rose to take leave: “Drop in and see me at Vierny!” Trotsky called in farewell, gaily.

I made no allusion to the struggle which had turned out so tragically for him. That is a family quarrel, and the stranger should not take sides. Otherwise he will fare badly with all members of the family!

THE NEW POLICY

(Moscow, April 9th, 1928.)

The present trend in the domestic policy of the Soviet
Moscow, April 9th, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

State performs the special service of illuminating a number of constant laws fundamental to its nature.

No doubt is possible that the stringency in the current supply of wheat is due to passive resistance on the part of the propertied peasants. Now the Soviet State (or "Stalin," as they say, for short, in English-speaking countries) might have raised the price on wheat. It might have curtailed its programme for industrialization. Instead of machines for the factories it might have imported tools necessary for agriculture. In a word, it might have done any one, or all, of a number of things which would have awakened initiative and restored confidence in that class of the peasantry whose contribution is really important in the general economic life of the country. The Kremlin, that is, might have "gone to the Right"; and in view of the catastrophic falling off in agricultural exports, which produces an unfavourable trade-balance for the past five months, that, according to ordinary ways of thinking, would have been the natural thing to do.

Instead, the peasant was shown a clenched fist! The wheat was seized!

That was not the worst of it! A "policy of classes" had previously been tried in the rural districts. For some time past 35 per cent. of the peasant farms had been left entirely free of taxes—the farms of the "poor" peasants, to be exact. On the other hand, the richer peasants were hard pressed by taxes and political harassings. A widespread discouragement had come over the elements that were more powerful in economic terms, and the passive resistance mentioned was the expression of that discouragement. Out of a total of some 24 million farms in Russia, only 3.2 millions show an income of over 600 roubles. In spite of this, a relatively oppressive and depressive policy had been followed for years past against the great majority of the prosperous farmers, though without any intention of forcing an open conflict.

But now, during the past winter, the peasant has shown himself an independent and a hostile force in the domain of the proletarian dictatorship. So the class war is being prosecuted in earnest, for the first time.

The State has hitherto displayed no very considerable

END OF THE OPPOSITION

activity, from the Socialist point of view, in the agricultural field. It has been principally interested in gaining control of the factories. Now it comes forward with a programme for the rapid socialization of the productive resources of the "middling" and "poor" peasantries, with the object of dispensing with the production of the rich peasantry, the *kulaks*, at the earliest possible moment.

Is this just a programme, as so much, so very much, is, in Russia? In any event we may already note confiscations *en masse* of "illegal" land holdings in the Ukraine, the region that produces the greatest wheat surplus. It is reported that not less than 1,500 *kulak* co-operatives, formed for the common utilization of tractors and other farm machinery, and hitherto operating under the patronage of the State, have been dissolved and the tractors seized against indemnifications still to be paid, and handed over to the poorer farmers for their use! For now, in place of the "fictitious" co-operatives of the *kulaks* which, the State at present contends, were designed simply to throw a mantle of virtue over private or capitalistic ownership, "genuine" co-operatives are to be formed among the "middling" and "poor" peasants, and all the assistance that has been lent to agriculture will henceforward be devoted to them exclusively.

In this policy the Soviet Régime is undoing much of the work it has already done for the improvement of agriculture, work from which the wealthier farmers derived not the least, nor the least important, advantage. The "Smitska," however, concentrates on the economically weaker peasantry and presents a razor edge to the *kulak*.

A most significant reversal! For this "turn to the Left," instead of "to the Right" represents an experiment of uncertain outcome! Will the rich peasant allow himself to be superseded by "collectives" and "communes"? The Kremlin may hope so, but it is a long way from being able to say so, with certainty. Constant pressure must now be exerted upon those elements which have hitherto exclusively provided agricultural necessities for the general population. The wheat surpluses have just been violently confiscated. But now the government must go on and violently provide a

SOVIET RUSSIA

sufficient supply of seed-wheat for the spring sowing ; and, under present circumstances, the "rich" peasant is interested in such a supply only so far as his individual requirements are concerned.

While the financial situation of the State is unquestionably strained, and the government feels obliged to make enormous outlays in the industrial field, it now chooses to join battle with that class of dogged and shrewd peasants, scattered over the vast territories of the country, which has always produced the necessary wheat-surplus and has hitherto been regarded as an irreplaceable national resource.

In all this the Socialistic inclinations of the people at the Kremlin may find keen satisfaction ; but, unfortunately, it is much less a question of sentiment than a question of power.

The renewed vigour of the war on the NEP which is at present in progress is only a sort of reflex from the much more fundamental agrarian problem, and from the present attempt actively to solve it in the interests of the proletarian dictatorship. If the Régime is to gain control over the peasantry, it must control trade to a much greater extent than was considered necessary when the New Economic Policy was instituted. Only in this way, in the face of the general scarcity of liquid means, can the State control prices. Only in this way can it remain liquid itself !

The lesson must be learned from the experience of these recent years : private initiative in the field of trade, as well as in the industrial field, is bound to become dangerous, unless the already severe restrictions on the NEP are considerably strengthened. So the war on trade is being waged more hotly than ever : taxes, refusals of credit by the banks which are all in the hands of the State, prohibitions of goods-deliveries to private individuals, and a thousand irritations from laws and regulations, to violate any one of which sends the offender off, over the "administrative" route, the route of the G.P.U. to Narim and Solovietski-Monastery ! A policy "toward the Left" for intensive socialization with the ultimate objective of complete communization ! Contempt for all "convenient solutions" ! For if one "went to the Right" in connection with State controlled enterprise and the

END OF THE OPPOSITION

co-operatives, if private initiative were exploited to the full in the interests of State finance and national prosperity, could one not count on a much more rapid growth in national wealth, on much more regular deliveries from the peasants, on much better results in fighting unemployment? In spite of that, the turn is "to the Left"! And, turning to the Left is one not acting under a clear and very simple law: that individualist prosperity and Sovietist prosperity, within the same economic unit within a given State, are mutually contradictory terms; or, softening extremes somewhat, that they can exist side by side, only when individualist, bourgeois activities in business are confined within very narrow limits?

This would seem to be the teaching of seven years of experience as to the practicability of the NEP.

The present policy of the government is evidently grounded on the presumption that the experiment has turned out much less favourably than was expected. It is turning, accordingly, to wholesale experimenting in rapid socialization, and is deliberately sacrificing available economic resources, the loss of which must lead to most serious consequences unless they can be replaced in time by socialized production. The Kremlin, nevertheless, with that readiness to recognize unwelcome truths which has always characterized its domestic policy, is going coolly ahead along the road of experimentation; and it is Stalin—with not a little hesitation we may be sure, on the part of his comrades—who is leading this bold sortie from the treacherous haven of Nep-security out upon the seas of new adventure.

In view of this whole picture, it is obviously a question not of isolated measures but of a new policy. This policy, in keeping with the temperament of the masters of the Soviet State, will be carried out with vigour. If a complex of bourgeois forces has shown itself dangerous in the economic sphere, then those forces must be dangerous in the political sphere—in other words, to the Party! Since war on the *kulaks* as a class, and on the Nepmen as a class, has become necessary, all compromises between the proletarian system and the bourgeois inheritance which have carried concessions too far must be corrected. Above all, the rank and file of the Party must be

SOVIET RUSSIA

“activized”! Hence the slogan, “Control by the Masses”! And, at the same time, eliminations of all influences, whether domestic or from abroad, which might engender doubts as to the soundness of the policy which the State is following!

And so, again, as regards the Right Opposition—a house-cleaning! No offence intended—so help us Lenin! Very valuable, deservedly honoured men—till quite recently! But the most important thing is to prevent any scattering of the energies, any shattering of the convictions, of the Party.

Faith, ruthless faith, is the thing more than anything else that has built this State, the faith of the Social Revolution! The practical Stalin is as practical as he ever was—from his point of view! And the Soviet State enters upon a new phase of its labours, a new phase of its history! It enters upon it with increased risks and increased hopes, both born of its faith and of the pressure of circumstances!

TROTSKI'S BANISHMENT FROM THE UNION (Moscow, January 31st, 1929.)

To-day's newspapers in Russia make no reference to the banishment of Trotsky from the Soviet Union. It has for some days been asserted as fact in certain circles abroad—they are known, to be sure, for their anti-Bolshevist bias.

Of the reasons for the alleged banishment one can speak at present only in hypothetical terms.

There are precedents for such punishment in the history of the Soviet Union. Lenin thus rid himself of a number of dissenting “comrades” of Social-Democratic leanings—I am thinking particularly of Matov. And in August, 1922, seventy-two Russian University professors were exiled to Germany because of their general attitudes.

Not long ago over one hundred and fifty Trotsky sympathizers were arrested on the charge that they were enemies not only of the Party but of the Soviet system. This would seem to indicate continued “underground” agitation on the part of the Opposition. It is now just a year since the leading Oppositionists were sent into exile. Since then not only has agitation continued, but it gained momentum during the campaign against the “turn to the Right.” The trouble seems

END OF THE OPPOSITION

to have occurred in the factories, especially. This year, too, wage-adjustments have encountered great difficulties, and the trouble was variously ascribed to the activities of the Opposition. In view of very severe measures which were taken against the leaders of this unrest (the repression extended even into foreign countries) it would have been plausible to expect some procedure against Trotski, as a means of extirpating the disaffection root and branch.

And there is still one final consideration. Rumours have long been current that a number of the Oppositionists who were so much in the public eye last year have made advances toward the Party, or at least hinted at their intention of doing so. That general peace has not been effected in spite of that is said to lie in Trotski's uncompromising attitude. Trotski's banishment from the Soviet Union would facilitate matters in this respect.

STALIN'S WAY

(Moscow, late February, 1929.)

The Centre of the Party, gathered about Stalin, does not deny that the situation has its risks and its agonies; but they regard the alternative policies of their critics on the Right, who are pleading for caution, as frankly dangerous. They answer: the more completely economic life in Russia is socialized and centralized, the easier it will be to emerge from the present morass. Any "turn to the Right" is for them a "retreat to the Right" and involves lingering on the danger point in the progress of socialization—the point, namely, where private enterprise is in the final stages of extinction and socialized enterprise is not yet sufficiently developed to replace it. On the contrary, the sooner the "dead point" is passed, in the turn of the revolutionary wheel, the better! One does not dillydally in the path of the avalanche—one hurries on! To go back now would be to give a fresh breathing space to the Nepman and the *kulak*, whose elimination has been the one laborious achievement of the past year. And now we begin over again? But, another thing: supposing in view of their multifarious experiences under the NEP, the Nepman and the *kulak* did not venture forth again? Or, in the more

Moscow, late February, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

favourable case, if they again got control of important and influential positions in business, could they be driven out still a third time? And, supposing they could be, would the Régime not be exactly where it is at present, only under less favourable circumstances, because exhausted after its last effort? No! There is only one thing to do: go forward, and as fast as possible! Front left!

As I have said, most people who judge the debate between the Centre and the Right at long range and take it as a matter of course that the Centre should share the "reasonable" economic views of the Right, forget that this State is a Bolshevik and Socialist State not only in its present policies but in its essential nature. "Governments are maintained by the forces which brought them into being!" Stalin apparently perceives this truth more vividly than his "reasonable" opponents who on "practical" grounds are advising "caution." He can answer that the maintenance of the Soviet Régime is also an eminently practical affair and that frequently there is no choice among the methods required to preserve it. The Soviet State has been deliberately based on certain classes in the population, and is managed for the benefit of those classes, and for the destruction of all other classes. That is the meaning of the Soviet State and its justification for existing, and it has never thought of itself in any other terms! Hard, absurd-sounding truths, but truths substantiated by Soviet history, when that history is read aright!

The people who take this point of view are the ones who hold power in Russia to-day; but not so absolutely that they are not called upon to defend their power by making it felt! The present controversy revolves about this very point.

We are told that the Right is complaining of "the intolerance of the 'Machine' within the Party"; and even more concrete laments transpire from the newspapers (they are all in the hands of Stalin's "Centre"), among them, this one: that Party secretaries are no longer being elected, but appointed!

This method of naming Party secretaries was put into force by Stalin a year ago, after the destruction of the Opposition. He held full control of the Politburo, and named

END OF THE OPPOSITION

men of his own choice to the secretariat. The Party secretaries meantime are gaining more and more importance in the life of the Party. Whence a louder and louder demand for "more Party democracy"—that one among Trotsky's various slogans which has shown most tenacious vitality! Those who use it are met with an exquisitely selected phrase: the necessity of "centralized democracy"; and this in turn has provoked an apothegm from the Right: "Democracy tempered with autocracy." Stalin's pet phrase, the Party's "general line," again invokes "unity within the Party," the dogma that the Party must stand united and that all success derives from that unity. Just as it had to be defended to the Left, against the Opposition, so now it has to be defended to the Right!

The question therefore arises as to whether the situation which prevailed a year ago in regard to the Left Opposition has not again been reached.

The democratic West cannot see any danger in such a growth of "wings": in them, indeed, it would see a guarantee of sound policy. But the democratic West is always forgetting that the Soviet State is a machine for making war, that it exists, and chooses to exist, for a fraction, only, of its population! So, again in the present instance, it is severing the sheep from the goats in a fear-inspiring test as to who is, and who is not, worthy to exercise political rights within it. In this action, too, which is radiating outward from the Centre, we may detect a quickening pace in the progress of nation-wide socialization; and here again the issue is the defence of the State, not the solution of a "practical" problem, as the men on the Right think. War is being declared all along the line against the theory (which Bukharin buttresses with quotations from Lenin) of "too rapid tempo," and of "too great exertion," the product, this latter, of what, in the eyes of Bukharin, is a premature "finish fight" for Bolshevik Socialism.

All such "pessimism," all such "crêpe-hanging," the Centre condemns. Boldness, rather, a fear-nothing policy! In this spirit, indeed, the Soviet State has always been managed. But never has a responsibility so great weighed upon those responsible as at this moment.

SOVIET RUSSIA

The situation will surely eventuate in some compromise ; but the compromise will not be permanent, nor will it transfer power to the men on the Right. At this critical moment *Pravda* has invented a phrase which summarizes the content of Stalin's policy during past years, and its content, in an intensified form, during this last year : "the transformation of Nep-Russia into Socialist Russia."

In spite of the bitter quarrelling behind the curtain, the combatants all broke bread together in perfect harmony around the master-table at the Party conference in Moscow ! Whatever else it may lack, this Party certainly has a tradition ! But—has Stalin ever forgiven anyone who tried to snarl his "general line" ?

PART IV

RUSSIA IN EUROPE AND ASIA.

CHAPTER I

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

THE "KOMINTERN"
(Moscow, late June, 1924.)

The united Communist Parties of the world ; the Moscow "Central" in which they are united ; finally the building in which the Central is housed—that is all "Komintern."

The "Komintern" as a building is not in the Kremlin. It is situated next door to the Kremlin. It used to be a rather fashionable apartment house. In front of it stands the long (too long) "Riding Hall" of Alexander I, now a garage. Looking along between the two buildings the eye falls upon the most beautiful portion of the Kremlin, its most colourful walls, its most attractive gate, behind which, rising in terraces, the great palaces, the high, slender, white towers topped with cupolas of a dark rich gold. To stand just there, before just that picture in just that frame, where everything seems interdependent and where Past, Present, and at least a piece of the Future, are treading on each other's toes, is surely more significant for us to-day than any view down from the Roman Capitol.

The "Komintern" (still the building) has just been painted a soft water-green—an appropriate sign of youth and unpretentiousness. This dressing-up is in honour of the newly assembled Congress of Party members—"comrades," it is still the fashion to say, since the "comrades" prefer to think rather in military than in petty-bourgeois terms. Over the central entrance hangs a large shield of "Welcome" to the members of what is certainly the most excited, if not the most exciting, political party in the world. The shield is just an artificial symbol of the many changes that have "quite naturally come to pass" there ; the bourgeois apartment house swallowed by Communism ; the parade hall of the Tsar's officers become a garage for government automobiles ; and the Kremlin, again the seat of power, as it was in the days of
Moscow, late June, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

the first Tsar, Ivan Grozni, but now in contempt of all its ancient splendours! To this new Communist power they can, in fact, mean nothing! But what about the shield? On it I note the picture of a factory worker with a hammer raised. Where is the blow to fall? On the chains that are twined about the blue-coloured terrestrial globe in front of him? But isn't there danger that to break the chains might mean cracking the globe and letting the molten lava inside it loose? That question did not interest the painter, or at least the designer who inspired the painter. The gesture, the attitude, was what appealed to him. And yet, rather than a hammer, a file would have been a better instrument for cutting the chains away. You see—the symbol is too pretentious! It really teaches a lesson in sobriety!

The delegates from the rest of the world must feel a little like poor relations. They are virtually diplomats accredited by the parties abroad to the Central, where the Cabinet of the Fulfilment has its seat—a group of names unavoidably historical, with all the authority that comes from success and from the possession of the most modern form of Power. That the Communist Party of the Soviet Union should take such a lead is natural enough. The “foreign” delegates are not, for the most part, the leaders of their home parties which are fighting on the home fronts. And the home parties are after all only “parties,” often very weak parties, bound to their respective Parliament, even though they are careful to make it clear that they do not like parliaments, and prefer dictatorships of the proletariat. These foreign representatives live here close to the active controlling centre of the Russian Party, but without exerting any great influence upon it. Through them, however, Moscow exerts a continuous influence, as critic and mentor, on their home parties. The representatives in question live a half Bohemian life, each with one, or perhaps two, rooms in hotels which have been emptied for their use—the “Hotel Lux,” for instance, which is still called by its former name though it has been rebaptized as “The Soviet House.” Their children play about the dark corridors, and accustom themselves more readily than their parents to the language and the climate of this strange land.

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The standing organization of the "Komintern" counts, I should say, some four hundred people, over half of them foreigners. One must then add the "Party visitors," who come to Moscow as to a Mecca or a Rome, now to discuss plans, now to have quarrels settled, now to clear themselves of charges, now to strengthen their home positions. Even the strongest among such guests have never had their strength "tested under fire." They too are overshadowed by the "big comrades," who do not need to be "intellectuals" any longer! Under these circumstances the preponderance of the Russians is quite natural.

The question as to whether the "Revolution in the West" must not be something different from the Russian in assumptions and in methods is just dawning here. It is a real problem. If it could gain the floor in party discussions, there is no doubt that "the Westerners" would begin to be more independent of the "Easterners." But this contingency is still a long way off. I was talking to a young Communist about the falling off in the study of foreign languages in Russia; and I pointed out that that would almost fatally result in the isolation of Russia in the civilized world "When the Revolution comes, everybody will speak Russian!" he replied.

OFFICES AND CONGREGATIONS

What is the function of the "Komintern"?

It is not, as other "Internationals" have been, just a representative body, a clearing house, a "conference." It is a "super-executive." It is a court of final appeal on questions of Party dogma. It is a standard scales for weighing convictions. It co-ordinates revolutionary activities and revolutionary tactics in the various countries. It keeps a sharp eye on "the world situation" in search of revolutionary opportunities. It manufactures slogans and war-cries. It is a propaganda body. It lends its help to the different national parties.

It is a "super-executive" to such an extent that it has in every national Party-headquarters a representative who is not of the nationality of the party in question. Moscow, to just that extent, holds apart from the different parties and stands

Moscow, late June, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

above them. This "League of Proletariats of all Nations" arose at almost the same time as the League of Nations; and it would be interesting, though not in point just here, to compare these two after-the-war twins in their manner of going about their respective tasks, and their respective prospects of success.

The Russian League, certainly, has borrowed traits now from the bourgeois Foreign Office, now from the Roman Curia, now from the military General Staff! In his jubilee speech before the Fifth Congress of the Komintern, Zinoviev reviewed the history of the Third International. At first, he said, "the propaganda viewpoint had held the field" and "now the Komintern has full grown parties everywhere." However, to judge the Komintern and the political dangers, present and future, connected with it from its propaganda, would be superficial and childish. Propaganda—the printing and circulation of literature, the distribution of subsidies, the promotion of lectures, and such things—constitutes, I believe, only a small part of the work of the Komintern. All that is done in the pale-green building is by no means so visible to the naked eye.

The work is divided now among "Sections," each dealing with a different country or group of countries; and now among "Commissions," each dealing with some important topic: "The Political Outlook"; the "Question of Nationalities"; "Agrarian Questions"; the "Information Bureau." This is the atmosphere of the Vatican: Offices and Congregations. The activity is "scientific"—the collection and classification of data; and it is gigantic in scope: business and economics, in general and in particular; domestic politics in all different countries—the different problems and tendencies in each. Everything is interesting, because some day all those countries are going to belong to the dictating proletariat; and meantime the tabulations serve for estimating prospects, for feeling out where a wedge may be driven in, where there is a crack, a hole, an opening! The Komintern building is eternally littered with newspapers, books, pamphlets. The same interest in abstractions, in ideas, and in cunning devices for their presentation, as in the old times, in the Swiss cafés!

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

Add to all that the "Information Service" supplied by agents, sympathizers, friends. The positive result deriving from these various efforts is a running tabulation: "This is the general situation in Europe, in America" and so on; "this or that event has this or that significance for 'the Movement'"; "this or that tactic must be followed by the Parties as a whole or by each Party in particular, under this or that slogan, this or that theory"; for each national Party has, of course, to deal with special national problems, and with special reactions from the general revolutionary situation upon its particular field. It is here that the direct influence of the Komintern begins, its work of suggestion, of initiative, of commanding and demanding, of arbitration—when differences of opinion arise. It is evident that with such pretensions, which the Komintern makes in its own behalf and enjoins upon others, propaganda can be only a part of its activities. It is a sort of side-issue to its main task of enlightening and managing Communist activities at large.

ZINOVIEV AND HIS OPPONENTS

(Moscow, late June, 1924.)

The work for the great goal, for the immediate and remoter objectives which are to be attained, can be carried on only through an uninterrupted struggle within the Party, as the present Congress is again making apparent. It is very much the picture that is offered at the congresses of the Russian Communist Party; and, again, it is very much a question of personalities.

The man at the Komintern is Zinoviev, the most effective agitator the world has ever known, master of a marvellous talent for getting hold of the masses and never letting them go. Very few among the Soviet leaders are without some oratorical talent; but they are all born political geniuses. Yet no one of them is so wholly accounted for in talk as Zinoviev.

Zinoviev's opponents in the Komintern and elsewhere in the Party will not be in the least disposed to eschew the use of such talents as he possesses as a leverage for prying the present structure of society loose from its hinges. Zinoviev calls such people "opportunists" or "petty-bourgeois."

Moscow, late June, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

They might be called "universalists," because they regard as useful any element in Russia, or in the world at large, that may directly or indirectly serve the great idea. They would take part in national parliaments, co-operate with other non-Communist labour parties, and if the gates cannot be crashed, they would be willing to wriggle in through the smallest keyhole. They are great sticklers for diagnosis, for exact surveys of the ground before any major operation is undertaken. Perhaps Trotski is to be counted among their number, though he is a man more ready than anyone else to test his theories under the hard knocks of reality. And certainly of the same group is the shrewd Radek, a man of ideas, inexhaustible in his living knowledge of international politics and economics, a diagnostician of the first rank, and a man of great resourcefulness.

If the hammer is the natural tool of Zinoviev, his opponents stand for the file. For a prophet, the time it may take for his prophecies to come true is a matter of no great importance. The fulfilment itself is everything. These people understand the actual moment and how to use it. Speaking from the bourgeois point of view, it is reprehensibly ingenuous to consider them more friendly and less dangerous than the extremists. Try to imagine on the shield over the entrance to the Komintern, instead of the "painted villain" (to use Shakespeare's phrase) who actually is there, a cowering, far less aggressive labourer working away with a file! It would be a much more uncomfortable symbol.

In the Party quarrel Radek (and not only Radek) is being reproached for having hindered the revolutionary drive in Germany during October and November—for having been "against Hamburg." Zinoviev, as he may well do after the fact, is pushing the charge indignantly! But the trouble is, Radek probably knew why he was inclined to wait. And can he not in any event soundly ask in reply why he was allowed to wait?

One must admit that for the third parties concerned in this quarrel, for those bystanders in the West who have nothing to gain from it and much to lose, these two opponents supplement each other all too perfectly!

CHAPTER II

RAPALLO AND AFTER

RAPALLO AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (Genoa, April 18th, 1922.)

The excitement is great. The Russo-German Treaty which was signed on Sunday came as an utter surprise to most of the participants in this Conference.

The newspapermen are penned up together in the *Casa della Stampa*. Rubbing elbows with one another, their reaction was unusually quick. They learned of the Treaty by two o'clock on Sunday. The Germans were able to control the news and the currents of opinion only for a few hours. Shortly after four o'clock Russia published the full text of the agreement and issued a short statement. Then the directors of Allied publicity and visitors at the Allied delegations began appearing with grave faces. By seven o'clock the counter-stroke of the Allies was in full development.

It was, one must say, exceedingly vigorous. Published comment from individuals standing close to Lloyd George, Barthou, and Schanzer, vie with the official communiqués in outspoken severity. The Treaty was turning the Conference, and Europe itself, upside down ! It was " an act of bad faith " ! And the like. This storm from on high drew into its vortex many neutrals who take their lead in policy only from the Allies. The Americans and a few Spaniards made brave efforts to look at the situation dispassionately ; but they too could not conceal their anxiety at the great cloud which had suddenly gathered over the Conference and was menacing Germany.

And why all the excitement ? The explanation is always the same : that the spirit, the atmosphere, the general outlook, of the Conference are being disturbed by the Rapallo Treaty ; that the Treaty blocks the road which the Inviting Powers had been following in the very delicate matter of Russia ; that it

SOVIET RUSSIA

has created an alignment of forces destructive to the unity of the Conference ; that it will cause most unfortunate reactions in the various Allied capitals ; that the Conference had laboriously been steered into very special waters, where now it must drift aground ! Good feeling, in a word, has been ruined !

It is a fact that the chiefs of the various Delegations will have to count on troubles at home as a result of the conclusion of the Russo-German Treaty. Lloyd George's situation in London is hourly growing worse, because the Conservatives are anxious to unseat him and may try to get back to power over the Genoa route. Barthou is afraid of Paris. Paris may say that such tricks should not be played on a French diplomat. The Italians are proud of having the Conference in Italy, and they are, in any case, disposed to damn anything that seems to complicate whatever they are doing. The nations of the Little Entente see in any strengthening of the position of Russia a limitation of their own possibilities as against Russia. Only the Baltic States, who must find some way of approaching their big neighbour on the East, are showing some understanding of the matter ; and the Poles too are satisfied. They feel that their importance to the Allies increases with every widening of the breach with Russia. The general feeling is that the Conference is seriously threatened by the developments certain to ensue in the home capitals. Reports from Paris and London are eagerly awaited. The French Delegation has urged moderation on its Press representatives. They will not pay much attention. The English have given free rein to theirs. Their idea seems to be to take the edge off the criticism, at least off the severest criticism, which London will make of the insubordination of which Germany has been guilty under the very noses of the Allied Statesmen. The Italians are frothing at the mouth in condemning the disturbance of the Conference.

Of course, there is no inclination to stick to such general reasons, in justifying the rapidly rising indignation. The French are stressing the point that the Cannes Protocol, to which all the powers accepting the invitation to Genoa were bound, has been violated, notably through Germany's cancel-

RAPALLO AND AFTER

lation of Russian debts, and on other points which the Conference was supposed to settle by common agreement. As the French claim, the Treaty prejudices any understanding between the Conference members and Russia, and makes negotiations between them and Russia, and even between each other, sensibly more difficult. It is too early to say just how far this argument will be pushed, and just what effect it will have here. It is more specially useful to those who are thinking of expelling Germany from the Conference. Discussion of such action was general in Allied circles this afternoon. The newest development is that some clever hand has been working out a threefold violation of the Versailles Peace on the part of Germany in making the Treaty with Russia, and the matter is being discussed by a solemn assemblage of jurists which is sitting this forenoon. The greatest effort is being made to arrive at some decisive action. There is hope that Germany can be forced to repudiate the Treaty on the basis of previous obligations. If one draw the sum of the disturbance, the very perceptible disturbance of the Genoa atmosphere, plus the violent thwarting of the purposes of the Conference from the point of view of the strongest and most deeply interested Powers and their dependents; plus the evident erection of a vigorous diplomatic opposition which has formed against the Russo-German Treaty in itself, the total weight would seem to be fairly heavy, and it is all to rest on the shoulders of Germany. In point of fact, the notably one-sided criticism is being levelled almost exclusively at Germany. Only from French headquarters come a few uncomplimentary remarks at the expense of Russia.

THE NECESSITY OF AN UNDERSTANDING (April 18th, 1929.)

The weight of responsibility is heavy, but Germany could not have done differently than she did, nor Russia either. The arguments of the two countries are virtually identical.

What has the Treaty of Rapallo really to do with the labours of the Conference or with the Protocol of Cannes? It prejudices nothing. It harms no one. Any possible concessions that the
April 18th, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

Allies might make in their dealings with the Russians Germany has anticipated in the Treaty. Furthermore, by the most-favoured-nation clause, she will participate in any advantages which the Allies may gain for themselves in the course of the Russian negotiations. In no sense, therefore, can the Treaty be said to break up the cohesion of the Conference. It is the typical treaty of a weak power which must protect itself from harm but cannot hope for any special advantages.

Of course! See Article 116! Russia does not share the friendly views which the Allies evinced in her behalf in the Versailles Treaty, when they left it open to Russia to accede to the French stipulations in regard to reparations for Russia. However, that is Russia's business, and the business of no one else. *Volenti non fit injuria*! Germany has simply avoided the danger that Russia might become a straggler bringing up the rear of the march from Versailles. But Russia was at just that parting of the ways, whether she chose to be or not.

What serious menace for Germany lay in the drift of events at Genoa was made apparent last week; and closely associated therewith were the indications which the Allies supplied to Germany as to their notion of what "solidarity" really meant! The secret conferences of the principal Allied Powers with Russia at the Villa de Albertis on Friday and Saturday were already alarming enough. But they were preceded by changes, never very widely remarked, in the Memorandum of London, whereby the most-favoured-nation clause was rescinded as regards participants in the Conference, and, as was later learned, the Powers directly negotiating with Russia reserved for themselves the results achieved in those negotiations—especially they reserved to themselves the right to admit just whom they chose to share in the advantages accruing to the "united participants in the Conference." The mention of subsequent negotiations in the Political Commission is beside the point. The conversations at Villa de Albertis were so arranged that at the beginning of "official negotiations" Germany would have found herself faced by a *fait accompli* and a united front. If Germany was notified of the opening of these private conversations, the conversations themselves went far beyond the subjects described in the

RAPALLO AND AFTER

notification. Germany may have been in touch with England during those days, but the fact gave Germany no influence. There was no effective contact between Lloyd George and the leaders of the German Delegation, in spite of two efforts on the part of the latter to establish such relations. Germany's isolation grew more apparent from hour to hour; and the prospect of her complete deliverance to the concessions eventually to be wrung from Russia, a power likewise isolated, became hourly more certain. Only through the annulment of Article 116 and through a most-favoured-nation clause was it possible for her to avoid the consequences which the policy of the Great Powers, disregarding Germany, and, on the questions raised in Article 116, directly antagonistic to Germany, was bound to have. The Soviet delegates saw that for Russia Genoa could only mean shouldering a debt of uncomputed billions. They found their way to the German Legation during the night of Saturday.

The Treaty required no special work at Genoa as far as the text went. The terms have been worked out in previous discussions, which had been taking place since February. They corresponded to the general interest of the two peoples signing the Treaty. The Conference occasioned very few changes in their wording. That fact alone suffices to show how far the Treaty was from having been drawn up "against the Conference," or even from being designed to play a rôle at the Conference—how natural, in a word, the signing of it was. According to well-informed Englishmen present at Genoa, the outlines of the Treaty must already have been made known to the English government in Berlin, and also the fact that Berlin was contemplating signing it at Genoa. At that time—there, in Berlin—the possibility of the signature was not regarded as anything so terrible. Why should it be so regarded now?

At Genoa Germany was given no guarantees that she would be able to protect her interests in Russian matters; or that she would be consulted on decisions touching Russian matters; or that anyone else would look after her interests. That there existed between the Germans and the Russians a formula whereby Germany was secured against oppressive

SOVIET RUSSIA

disadvantages, in fact, against humiliations, on her Eastern front, was known to everyone, or at least might have been. Why then such rage that Germany should have herself sought guarantees which, while her situation at the Conference was rapidly growing untenable, provided her with a support which she could not have found anywhere else? The support she actually found harms no one. The more violent the rage, the stronger the suspicion that Germany has merely thwarted a plan to execute the Peace of Versailles upon Germany on the Eastern Front as well, and a plan to involve Russia on both sides of the balance sheet—as creditor of Germany and as debtor to the Allies—in the same policy.

No one, at bottom, is desirous that the Conference should break up just now; and the expulsion of Germany would be tantamount to ruining the Conference. If the Conference, in fact, dissolved, proof would be given that it deserved to die, that it could not have been successful in any event. The Treaty with Russia is a vital necessity for Germany. If the Conference disbands because Germany signed it, the world will simply be shown what would have happened to Germany had she not signed the Treaty. And, in that case, things would still be the same!

THE YEAR OF RECOGNITIONS (Moscow, February, 1924.)

All the way down past Genoa the victorious Powers left Soviet Russia sitting in the ante-room, and the smaller countries, nay the smallest countries, eagerly followed that example. Now, to-day, that dreary vestibule has become the reception room of the Soviet government where it is making condescending acknowledgment of Recognitions. It never expected anything else. And the Soviet Press glosses the rush to the bargain counter with untiring wit.

The recognition of Russia by leading victor-Powers puts a logical period to an episode in European history which began with the Armistice of 1918. Of all the countries directly participating in the World War, Turkey is the only one besides Russia that can claim to have attained the goal which it set itself in dark days. For all Europe, with the exception

RAPALLO AND AFTER

of Russia, the result is frightfully unfavourable. After Russia has held to her own path during terrible years, her government now steps into possession of all the rights of a normal State, not only at home but also abroad. That is the situation to-day, unquestionably.

This triumph of the Soviet government seems all the more impressive if one consider under what deep-reaching moral antitheses to the rest of Europe Soviet Russia has come into her own, with what perseverance and consistency the Soviet government, insisting on its own system, has not so much denied as damned the system of the bourgeois powers, and how stubbornly resolved it still is not to allow this moral hostility to languish. Neither can one forget what sacrifices the Soviet Government has been ever ready to make in order finally to have its way.

It would be idle to speculate as to whether, during the dreadful period of the Interventions, the Government could, or could not, have come to terms with one or another of the enemy Powers. In any event it chose not to do so. The sacrifices continued at their full war height long after 1921. The terrors of famine would have been incomparably lessened had the Soviet government not met the readiness, nay the eagerness, of foreign capital and foreign enterprise to enter Russia, and even to force their way into Russia, with the greatest suspicion and an obdurate demand that they subordinate themselves absolutely to the Soviet idea. Complete independence of foreign countries has proved to be the strongest weapon with which Soviet Russia has been fighting, as she is still fighting, over all these years. But at the same time such independence resulted in that condition of semi-paralysis, of continued under-feeding and under-growth, from which Russia is still suffering, a condition which is still entailing from day to day general disturbances and individual sufferings of untold extent, along with unmistakable signs of recovery and a general improvement in outlook.

The first pre-requisite for understanding the new situation that results in Russia from these decisive Recognitions is not to forget all that has gone before as the price of final victory. Soviet Russia has found her own, her proper, road.

SOVIET RUSSIA

These many Recognitions to-day can only emphasize that the procedures on which she has based her policy were sound procedures. There is no reason in the world now for the Soviet Union to abandon them for the sake of Recognitions and to make Russia the playground of foreign ambitions, or more or less noble lusts for business. Henceforth, as before, Soviet Russia will be a country with which it will not be pleasant either to trade or to discuss trade.

With Italy, especially, the Russians will enjoy a real honeymoon for a certain length of time. In actual fact, what unites or separates Russia and Italy fundamentally is quite irrelevant. The thing that really draws them together has always been the temporary advantage of their cabinet policies. Such problems as those affecting Turkey or the Balkans they have hardly touched on as yet.

The pact with England is a *mariage de convenance* devoid of all romance. The point is frankly admitted on both sides. At the ceremonies Tchitcherin uttered a few courteous banalities bearing the well-known stamp of days gone by. Meantime the Soviet Press, ever wont to pick a quarrel, has gone over to criticism in part based on mistaken hypotheses. At any rate it voices Russia's firm resolve not to be the loser in any business that may now ensue. The people at the Kremlin expect England to ask for concessions in Asia. But they are going to show their interest in the awakening East by demanding concessions, instead of granting any! A system of buffer-states along the British frontiers will supply the groundwork for the dickering with England.

In these very days a Central Asiatic Bank is being founded in Moscow, with a capital of perhaps 15, and at least 7½, millions in gold roubles shortly to be divided between Soviet-Turkestan, Khiva, Bokhara, and the People's Commissariat of Finance in Moscow. No secret is being made of the political purposes of this bank; and corresponding enterprises to deal with Mongolia and Persia are in the offing. These measures furnish one more proof that the active interests of Moscow lie toward the East, and are by no means confined to the intensive cultural propaganda of nationalist hue which Soviet Russia is conducting everywhere in Asia.

RAPALLO AND AFTER

One must cherish no illusions as to the fact that the first success of this propaganda will be in the direction of a national awakening in Asia rather than of an awakening of revolutionary class consciousness, in the European sense of the term, among the Asiatic masses. But Soviet Russia is confident that such sentiments will operate not against herself but against others—against Turkey, England, Japan, shall we say. The excitement of last summer has shown that England is already feeling the pinch. She will not allow herself therefore to be argued off the map. She will study any official proposals made by Soviet Russia with regard to the East with more particular attention than would otherwise be the case. In that event Soviet Russia will be less inclined than ever to depart from her principle of never seeming to be in too great a hurry.

THE ENGLISH MEMORANDUM (Moscow, July, 1926.)

As regards the Memorandum which Mr. Chamberlain sent to Soviet Russia last month, the people at the Kremlin are not saying just what they said in reply to Lord Curzon's Ultimatum of 1923, that, namely, it was "stupid." They depicted Curzon as a peacock trying to spread its tail in a high wind. To-day, instead, underlying the studied restraint with which the English government is protesting against the Red propaganda in China and elsewhere, they suspect and they fear something systematic. They feel painfully confirmed in the idea that England is working away methodically at the foundations of Soviet Russia.

The question as to whether England has made up her mind to tolerate or to remove the red thorn that has been thrust into her skin, and, in either event, what devices she will employ and on what considerations of statesmanship, is a matter of importance to Europe. As things stand to-day, Anglo-Russian relations are the only ones that contain genuine menace of an all-European war. Germany is automatically and primarily involved in the situation. She exerts a regulating influence upon it, whether by commission or omission, whether willingly or unwillingly. In any event, the Continental public is under no obligation to prosecute *post festum* only, that

Moscow, July, 1926

SOVIET RUSSIA

research into the causes of war which, fortunately, has come into high esteem since the catastrophe of 1914-18.

To be sure, neither the domestic situation in England nor the domestic situation in Soviet Russia, permits either Power to attack the other. Russia is devoting all her energies to economic, and therewith to political, reconstruction. England is traversing a period of social unrest which assures to Russia those "comrades in the rear" without whom she would never venture on a war. However, Stalin, the strongest man in Soviet Russia (despite his unofficial status), has again repeated in his native Tiflis that the period of bourgeois consolidation, which he was obliged to prove in the autumn of 1924 against the hallucinations of the extremists in the Komintern, far from having ended, is becoming virtually complete. The security which Moscow may feel to-day as a result of the internal troubles of England, and of Europe generally, he describes as merely relative. It will be a different matter, he suspects, some years hence. Moscow is justified in calculating that, saving only in case of Recognition by the United States, for which the Soviet government is doing its utmost to prepare the ground, the international situation of Soviet Russia is likely to grow worse rather than better during these coming years. Of course, the Kremlin's attitude toward anything to be expected in the long run from the bourgeois camp has always been pessimistic. One has only to think of the cynical interpretations given in Moscow to the effort at Locarno. At the time, Russian utterances which are still having their effect to-day simply wrote Germany off the Russian asset sheet. That was absurd. But it must be admitted that in the case of England Russian pessimism can base its contentions on significant facts and definite symptoms.

ECONOMIC BOYCOTT

(Moscow, July, 1928.)

England's attack, as regards Soviet Russia, is staggered in economic and diplomatic "waves," and a military background is discernible.

The economic attack is now in progress. It is being led by finance, including the Bank of England, and by the power

RAPALLO AND AFTER

of the Exchequer, of which Mr. Churchill is Secretary. It is conceivable that English manufacturers and business men may be taking an indifferent, or an openly critical, attitude toward the financial and credit boycott which the powers in question are openly proclaiming against Soviet Russia.

What considerations are guiding English finance in this campaign? English money believes that Soviet Russia is facing increasing difficulties of an economic character. It believes that the Soviet Union's economic and industrial reconstruction, on attaining its present stage, is becoming too expensive. The Soviet organism is too weak to recuperate with its own resources. The crisis calls for a blood-transfusion from foreign economic organisms, from bourgeois Europe. Observation—an observation not inspired by good will, and probably hypersensitive to unfavourable symptoms—has convinced official England, especially since last spring, that an economic crash is imminent in Soviet Russia, and that it will cripple every department of Soviet business. Supposing now that its effects could be so intensified, by drawing an economic cordon around Russia, that that country could be reduced to utter helplessness, complete stagnation? The City has long been working on the Continent to recruit new confederates, or resuscitate old ones, for this type of warfare. It has been advising New York and Washington in the same sense. Not even German business men have been omitted from such attentions.

Moscow views this part of the English offensive with equanimity, if not with pleasure. The Russian population can support a lowering of the standard of living even below the present one. On this point the Western world is inclined to judge badly. Granted the not impossible eventuality that the urban, and even a portion of the rural, population in Russia were to find, as the result of general hard times, that firewood was either unavailable or too expensive, it would simply put up with the cold. If, as the enemies of Russia are willing to believe, financial conditions during the next half-year were to provoke a general food shortage, that fact would supply the Soviet State with another good reason for "giving a little more rope" to private initiative in Russia and her dependencies, but to no such extent as to admit speaking of

Moscow, July, 1928

SOVIET RUSSIA

any "surrender," any abandonment of the system that is under fire.

A favourite topic of discussion in Europe is whether "the Russian people," and the Russian peasant in particular, will "take all that in good part." Now it is doubtless a virtuous thing not to be fond of a Communist Party Dictatorship such as exists in Russia; but that is not a good reason for continuing to take stock in the prophecies of official and unofficial experts, who for eight years past, and as a matter of habit every three or four months, have been promising the collapse of the Soviet Régime, and gaining in authority and prestige at every postponement!

EUROPE'S "NATURAL MARKET"
(Moscow, July, 1926.)

If the collapse refuses to occur in deference to "economic logic," England's last resort for attaining her ends can be nothing short of war: war in the form of threats, war in the form of pressure, or actual war—this extreme possibility in the development of Anglo-Russian relations, Soviet Russia, Europe, and especially Germany, must hold in view, since the English are holding it in view.

The circles represented by the British Foreign Office, the Bank of England, the City, and allied Die-hards, believe that England, and that Europe, cannot climb the mountain of their present difficulties (difficulties summarized in a most baffling increase of unemployment) unless Russia again becomes a "natural market," a market which, in full possession of its personal talents and material resources, would enable Europe to exploit to the full (and perhaps more than to the full) the possibilities as an outlet which Russia formerly offered. If Soviet Russia needs a blood transfusion, Europe, overpopulated and over-mechanized, stands hardly less in need of one, though in a different sense. On this basis a lavish opening of Russian business is an absolute and unavoidable necessity for Europe—the fact is becoming more and more apparent every day. That is not all. The depression of Russia's native economic vitality is the cause of the present depression in Europe, and the cause of that general unemployment which

RAPALLO AND AFTER

the Red propaganda is driving deeper and deeper into the vitals of Western society. The Soviet Monopoly of Foreign Trade is the most efficient tool for the spread of Communism in Europe.

Now, it should be noted : the English have always practised statesmanship as the art of doing only what is necessary !

That Russia should again become a "natural market," very important people in England regard as a matter of economic, as well as political, life and death. England's economic campaign against the Soviet Union which is now in progress is serving at the same time as preparation for another and more serious form of combat against the Soviet system. There is no thought of a Napoleonic invasion of Russia. It is a question merely of changing the present form of government. English policy will use pressure, extreme pressure, upon Soviet Russia only in case England is met half-way by a wave of Russian opinion ; and just such a wave she expects from a progressive economic paralysing of the giant nation of peasants.

Such the process of future annihilation with which Soviet diplomacy and statecraft find themselves confronted. This process is just one of the possibilities that lurk behind the harmless daily routine of European life. The point is that it is actually developing !

THE POLICY OF "ENCIRCLEMENT" (Moscow, November, 1926.)

To judge by all recent utterances, it is the settled conviction of Soviet statesmen that, in view of the fundamental economic and social antagonisms prevailing between Soviet Russia and the capitalistic countries, the latter are destined to combine to form a united front against the Soviet Union ; and the chief supporter of this tendency, according to Moscow, would be England.

A very informing, and very competent survey, of the foreign relations of Soviet Russia has just been published here. Its authors establish that since reaching its high point at Locarno English influence on the Continent has been declining. English policy, however, has always been the
Moscow, November, 1926

SOVIET RUSSIA

policy of the longest wind in Europe, and of that the people in Moscow are well aware. It plods doggedly on in its effort to paralyse Soviet Russia internationally; and the Russians are right in seeing in the effort a preliminary step to a united front.

Nevertheless, during the past fiscal year (1925-6), England has held the lead in Russian foreign trade. The Russian money market is officially under boycott by banks and manufacturers; but, evidently, this English "prohibition" has as many holes in it as American "prohibition." The English co-operatives, with their colossal resources in cash, are openly following a conciliatory financial policy in Soviet Russia, doing very much what they please there.

Now to argue from the fact that a tendency in international policy exists that it is bound to be realized—to discount, as it were, its realization in advance, and trusting all the while to considerations in great part theoretical, is one of the best ways to help the tendency in question to fulfilment. Moscow waits with a certain fatalistic resignation for the united front to become a fact for the simple reason that it must become a fact. This attitude robs Moscow of preventives easily within its reach.

I personally cannot foresee in Europe any such old-fashioned united front based on brute force, at least not for a long time to come. It is much easier for me to foresee a united front of hard-working labour, each of us in his own garden and each working with very practical notions as to how to make his effort effective, and each of us greatly disillusioned as to international coalitions along the lines of the old balance of power. It may well be that the older types of diplomatic thought still linger on about certain Foreign Offices and in a few conservative heads—as, for instance, in the head of Mr. Joynson Hicks, who, to judge by his behaviour, seems utterly determined to have the revolution which the Bolsheviks also want.

Much more hopeless, much more fraught with tragic possibilities, would be a situation in which the weight of economic opinion in Europe, as regards Russian trade, would roast Soviet Russia over a slow fire, so to speak, as a reaction

RAPALLO AND AFTER

to the voluntary isolation in which she has placed herself, and to the repellent measures which she is ever and anon devising. For such a result no deliberate conspiracy would be necessary. From the German point of view the economic paralysis that would most certainly ensue has every reason to be feared—and that is the fear also of the Opposition inside the Soviet Régime.

Russian foreign trade to-day represents only a little more than 37 per cent. of its pre-War figure, and to-day's figure itself in no way corresponds to pre-War economic values. There is no prospect of any very rapid development from the height that has now been reached; since, actually, Russian business activity seems to have come to a virtual standstill, without our being able to accept the official explanation that the "period of Reconstruction" is over, and that Russia is now entering on a period of "less erratic development."

It is my feeling that by psychologically apposite and uniform advances to foreign countries, the Soviet State would be able to find that assistance which now approaches Russia with the greatest hesitancy and the greatest caution; and I believe that this could be done without, from the Soviet point of view, compromising any of the Socialistic principles, the achievements of which as thus far made, the Régime quite justifiably refuses to abandon, and which it is determined to carry further still. It is by no means out of the question that England would prefer to any other development an exclusion of Russia from international intercourse, and all the more a voluntary political and economic self-exclusion on Russia's part; and that she intends to establish the united front only so far as the united front would help toward such an exclusion. In view of her tottering position in Asia, England has to fear a rapid growth of Russia's power in the East much more than any propaganda the Soviet government may make in England. Such growth in strength might take place at a more violent speed under present conditions than under those formerly prevailing. In every one of his articles in the *Fortnightly Review*, "Augur" (Poliakov), a very representative writer, fans that mistrust of the bourgeois world which is

Moscow, November, 1926

SOVIET RUSSIA

already lively enough here in Moscow ; and he too arrives at the conclusion that to wait for an attack by Russia is a wiser policy for England and her possible allies, than to take any initiative herself which might drive Germany, and perhaps other countries, into the Russian camp.

TREATIES WITH BORDER STATES (Moscow, November, 1926.)

"Augur's" articles also show that mistrust not alone dominates the atmosphere in Moscow. He stresses the fact that Soviet policy, even if inspired all along by consciousness of impending danger, has been notably more active during the past months. Among the items of greatest importance to him is a system of treaties of friendship and non-aggression on which the Soviet State has been working for two years. Its principal idea has been as far as possible to draw the spikes in the heavy, many-linked belt that has been tightened about its middle. Such neighbourly agreements have been struck with Afghanistan and with Turkey, with Germany and with Lithuania. A similar one with Persia seems promised for the near future ; and now the Baltic States, even without Poland, and forgoing provisions for joint action in all treaty relations with the Union, are apparently desirous of coming to terms with Soviet Russia. Negotiations with Poland have been fluctuating back and forth for a year or more. They seem to represent only tactical manœuvres. There is a report that the Soviet Union has now made advances to Italy.

The treaties in question have a technical character primarily. They come chiefly into operation as special incidents drag them forth from their files. These last weeks, nevertheless, have revealed certain diplomatic objectives which Soviet policy is pursuing through them.

That policy is evidently motivated by the idea of forging in the East a weapon for exerting leverage on European diplomacy. The idea is to combine in some form or other all those countries of Western Asia which are worried by problems of sovereignty or territorial integrity. If this group of countries could, even from time to time, speak a common language in the face of the West, a long step forward would

RAPALLO AND AFTER

have been made toward creating a counterbalance to the power of Russia's former Allies.

From her peculiar racial point of view, Turkey is following a similar plan; and it is by way of Turkey and through Turkey that Soviet Russia hopes to draw the Near East into her orbit.

These two ideas—they are only ideas—cannot be considered one apart from the other.

Turkey is economically dependent on the West, and she recognizes the fact more resolutely than Russia, in her case, does. Turkey is territorially more vulnerable. Against the Western Powers, accordingly, of whose covetous pressure she is keenly aware and all the more so now, through the growth of Turkish nationalism, she cannot manifest her resistance as outspokenly as Soviet Russia. The situation of Turkey in this respect offers a striking analogy to that of Germany in days not so very long past.

A maximum of independence for Turkey is a vital question for Soviet Russia; for if England, on her side, could reach the Caucasus by way of Turkey and the Black Sea (as rumour asserts she is trying to do), and reach the same Caucasus also by way of Persia, Russia's situation would be embarrassing indeed. Roumania would then become the pivot of a movement to the North which might eventually embrace Poland. In this latter region a network of treaties already exists. Some of them, as, notably, the Polish-Roumanian treaty, are directed against Germany, and in them, following the example of France, Italy is now trying to have her say.

The active tendency of Russian policy is merely a reply to all this. In Moscow great importance is attached to a thorough understanding of the precarious situation of Turkey. But the concern which the general movement of affairs about the Mediterranean is causing in Moscow is also understandable. The Soviets see Anatolia already in Italian hands, and Arabia under an Anglo-French condominium. They show proper alarm at the arrogance with which the Conservative Press in England is suggesting to Turkey that she would feel much better off under a mild but benevolent protectorate. How Turkey arose from certain destruction, as it seemed, and
Moscow, November, 1926

SOVIET RUSSIA

won her independence against England, England's Greek auxiliaries, and France, was all but a miracle. But now the reaction has already set in, and the miracle must demonstrate its genuineness. Dostoievski, in his time, wrote at length on "The Persecuted and the Downtrodden." And now representatives of many countries in Asia have met in Angora—among them, without warning, the brilliant and the fashionable Sze, ambassador from Peking; and the fact shows that Turkey feels herself drawn toward all countries which are living in the shadow of Power.

If Turkey enters the League of Nations, Moscow will see in that action the first sign of Soviet Russia's isolation to the South, and of an engagement on Turkey's part to submit to painful operations on her territorial body. Turkey herself is very loath to enter the League. She could do so only in fear and trembling, lest she find herself outvoted by the superior forces which she will have to confront there.

All these matters were discussed in general and in detail at Odessa recently in a conference between Tchitcherin and the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs; though nothing came of it save agreement as to the significance in principle of the matters in question. Russia surely never expected that things would go as far as the founding of a Near Eastern *bloc*, in the form of a "Near Eastern Locarno," or something of the kind. She may have hoped that Turkey's entrance into the League of Nations could be frustrated or at least postponed. However, the pressure of immediate circumstance was too great for Tewfik Bey to give a definite promise. Tchitcherin's personality must have inspired the Turks with confidence that Soviet Russia has, at this moment so pregnant with consequence for the future, a sympathetic and thorough understanding of the feelings of the Turkish statesmen, and trusts that, in spite of all the twisting and turning that may be necessary, the roads of the two countries will some day again unite.

CHAPTER III

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

THE CRISIS LOOMS

(Moscow, early February, 1927.)

Swords are rattling in Moscow.

To the Russia that is to-day coming into being war is poison, and no one knows that better than the Russians. The Soviet State is sincerely and in the highest degree pacifistic. And yet: "Russians, to arms!" "The enemy is at the gates!" "If war they will have, why then——" With that emphasis bordering on caricature which uneasiness eventually causes, the diplomatic situation of the Union is summarized in the lament: "We stand alone! The bourgeois world is combining against the detested government of the proletarians!"

Such war-cries will have a puzzling sound in the ears of the great majority of Europeans. Since the Russians are often brilliant tacticians, one has a right to ask whether, in this case also, as has been true of much of their calling upon the Lord in a loud voice, it be not a question of a tactical manœuvre—as it were, a manœuvre of diversion, aimed to turn the eyes of the Party toward foreign countries and away from the after-effects of the struggle with the Opposition, which is now being driven into the outer darkness, but whose ideas continue to exercise their "dialectical rights." One might also suspect on Moscow's part a desire to gain a moral advantage by first throwing the spotlight on foreign disturbers of the peace.

All such things, however, would not account for the financial sacrifices which the Soviet Union has just been making in order to strengthen its armament, nor for certain economic precautions which it has taken abroad. The Russians consider war, or something similar to war, not beyond the range of immediate possibilities.

Moscow, early February, 1927

R

241

SOVIET RUSSIA

And all on account of England! One has to examine the state of affairs with a certain system in mind. Within the British Conservative Party a movement is taking form with constantly increasing strength and definiteness, a movement tending toward a break with Russia. It expresses itself in public through "unofficial" declarations of Cabinet Ministers, things of the kind which the Germans failed to understand away back in 1911.

England does not want a war—she has many reasons, obvious enough, for not wanting a war. But she is considering in all coolness whether, some day, she will not be obliged to want a war! She is considering from every angle just what, under circumstances now known to everyone, a war against Soviet Russia might mean, and in just what manner the countries which are her henchmen might be brought to wage it, with or without her own participation. There is no doubt that England is at present planning "appropriate measures" against Soviet Russia in order to force the latter's hand less by aggression than by compression. These measures must lie in the domain, so notably enriched during these past years, of substitutes for war and attenuations of war.

In the category belongs the long familiar "severance of relations," which, in this case, would not mean war. The idea seems to have gained favour of late, in the British Cabinet. Of such other "appropriate measures" as are being contemplated we know nothing except that they are being contemplated. It is noteworthy that the closure of credits to the Union recommended to the City last November by Mr. Churchill made a very slight impression on the English firms which are doing business with Russia. But the diplomatic offensive which would cover and eventually support the direct attack is already in progress. It is ingeniously devised. Mr. Churchill made a speech in Rome in which to an exaggerated praise of Fascism he added a thrust at Moscow. The detail betrays the interest which the Conservative elements in England are taking, by way of Italy, in the activity of Fascists in Roumania, in Poland and also in Lithuania (for the Lithuanian *coup-d'état* had Fascist affiliations). So the

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

ground is being quietly prepared for the purposes of English diplomacy.

That diplomacy is already active in Lithuania. Many facts indicate that England is supporting the "greater Poland" idea with regard to Lithuania and therefore with regard to the Baltic—and this not without some friction with France. This alternation of rôles, seemingly so incoherent, can have only a tactical significance in English eyes, as serving the general purpose of tightening the girdle that is being drawn about Soviet Russia. To complete the picture we now hear that the preponderance of opinion in the British Cabinet has recently swung to the supporters of an "energetic" policy toward the Soviet Union. Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Chamberlain are coming into line. English policy has for some years followed a tactic of artful quiescence. It is now changing course.

There have been numerous occasions for excitement between Russia and England in the past. But the seriousness of the situation this time lies in the fact that since 1925 the friction has grown more sharply delimited but at the same time has broadened in scope. No moral or intellectual judgment is involved in the remark that Moscow has been the attacking party. Undeniably, the Russians took part with an extreme and altogether blatant energy in the British coal strike of 1926, and gave their participation the character of a far-reaching "intervention" by organizing their "Anglo-Russian Strike Committee." They furthermore set a political objective to their interference, with some success, as the event proved. The English miners conducted their strike with extreme bitterness. The English public at the time observed that an effort was being made to divert English labour from its insular "social loyalty" and turn it toward the class struggle and world revolution; and it now perceives that the effort was not altogether in vain.

The English public is sincerely alarmed. It feels that the same forces are being employed, though with different methods, against England in China. So, in one of their most important economic spheres, and then again on their own soil, they see the same programme in operation against them. Between
Moscow, early February, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

strike and China, England has lost some 300 million pounds in the course of one year; and Moscow can boast that in that same single year, 1926, Soviet Russia has won in both places victories along the pathway to her ideal which will figure in world history.

The greatness of England rests to no small degree on her sensitiveness to power. She measures the extent of Moscow's victory with keener discrimination than the rest of the world. She believes that she has underestimated Moscow, and she is asking herself whether the Russians may not have been right in making world revolution their watchword! . . .

THE BREAK WITH ENGLAND ; ITS ECONOMIC EFFECTS
(Moscow, May 25th, 1927.)

At some future time people may find it hard to understand the Sherlock Holmes interest which public opinion in Europe took in the searching and dismantling of Soviet House in London. We need not stress the point that the treatment accorded the Soviet Trading Agency does not make a very pretty page in the history of English civilization. But one thing was clear from the outset: the English episode was not just an "incident," as was the case with the raid on the Soviet Trading Agency in Berlin, in 1924: it could only be taken as a bit of stage-play in the execution of a preconceived political plan. What the plan was, and what lay behind it, seemed to many people less interesting than the other more obvious problem as to whether Mr. Joynson Hicks found anything after all. Mr. Joynson Hicks must have been working on the theory that if nothing could be found something had to be invented. The main point was to do something that would admit of no retreat afterwards. For such a purpose, if one grant that the end justified the means, nothing better than the raid on Arcos could have been devised. It is astounding that anyone could be naïve enough to suppose that on finding nothing Mr. Joynson Hicks would draw back humiliated. On the previous Thursday he had taken every precaution in advance with Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Chamberlain. It was deemed the psychological moment for leaping the ditch which separated

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

the ultimatum of February from a rupture of relations. The raid on Arcos was just digging in the spurs! Looking at the affair in retrospect, it seems very logical that things should have happened in just that manner.

Now that the catastrophe is before us, people will first of all concern themselves with the immediate consequences. A rather bold assertion, adapted only to a monopolized home consumption, is now being broadcast in Russia, to the effect that England is going to be harder hit than the Soviet State by her "hysterical procedure." The excellently edited *Ekonomitskaya Zhizn* imparts that, in the year 1925, English exports to Russia made up only 2 per cent. of the total English export trade (the corresponding figure for Germany would be nearer 4 per cent.). The proportion probably dropped for the year 1926; for English exports to Russia in 1925 totalled 13.2 million pounds, whereas in 1926 the figure was 12.3. Going as far back as the year 1913, the proportion of exports to Russia to the total English exports was 4.4 per cent.

But during the last half-year 27 per cent. of the total export of Russia went to England. Russia was never an indispensable customer for the British; whereas England, buying 27 per cent. of everything that Russia had to sell, stood actually at the head of Russia's market. Her next following rival in this respect, Germany, fell, according to latest figures, some 30 million roubles behind her! That is not all. The vast majority of the securities for Russian trade abroad are held in England, and the larger part of her shipping contracts. No offers on the part of Germany were ever able to dislodge England from this field. The credit market in the City was by no means closed to the Russians. While the City was lecturing the rest of the world on the theme that no oil should be fed to the fire of World Revolution, it was itself attaching great importance to Russian trade, and was saying to itself, if not to others: "Business is business!"

In view of all this, the deficit resulting to Soviet business from the rupture of relations, entails a shrinkage and an actual loss not to be taken lightly. The urgent and everpressing need of Soviet business for credits is generally known; and just as well known the government's policy of
Moscow, May 25th, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

whetting and exploiting (as it has every right to exploit) competitions within the bourgeois world. The available circle, in terms of organization and in absolute scope, is now made smaller. It is smaller by that arc which was most important for the Russian trade balance—by England, which absorbed and facilitated Russian exports to a greater degree than anybody else. The rupture cuts one branch off the tree of English business; for Soviet Russia it is a gash in the very trunk. To be sure, organization at the Foreign Trade Monopoly has been much improved of late. If what has happened now had happened two years ago the situation would have been much more serious. But, all the same, with the increase of investments at home, with a rapidly rising, perhaps overstimulated, State budget, with a currency that has become just a local medium of exchange, and in view of the many disappointments which Russian exports have caused during the last two years, the blow that is falling on Soviet business to-day is hardly to be compared with the slight effects the break will have on England, though Russia undoubtedly constituted a valuable market for the English.

But this account is far from exhausting the dangers to Soviet business. People in Moscow are saying that with her boycott of Soviet Russia England is isolating herself from the rest of the world and from world tendencies, and that other countries are eager to step into England's shoes. But England is undoubtedly relying on her strength as the greatest commercial power on earth, to be able in the long run permanently to cripple Russian credit—the subject most under debate in European counting-houses. The English still strike the keynote for the world's money market. Furthermore, no one is going to imagine that England is abandoning the Russian market for good, or has any intention of turning it over to foreign competitors. The pacemarkers in the City are of the opinion that the woes of European business will only superficially improve, and in the long run grow much worse, unless Russia again becomes a "natural market," and the normal circuit of business in Greater Europe as far as the Urals is restored. The indications therefore are that

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

England will regard the attitude of ill-humoured non-communication which she has now adopted as purely transitory. This fact cannot fail to dampen and gradually cripple initiative in the rest of Europe, save only clear proof be given that the issues which to-day separate England and the Union can be eliminated.

The present situation is an undefined something midway between peace and war. In adopting their new attitude, the English are figuring that it will prove in the long run unendurable to everybody, except possibly to the Russians, who have an unparalleled faculty for tightening their belts. The frightful uncertainty will, they calculate, eventually drive the rest of the world into the English camp, as a means of bringing matters to a decision.

"RAISON D'ETAT"

(Moscow, June, 1927.)

The foreigner is receiving timid greetings from his Russian acquaintances to-day. He may even not be recognized at all. There is danger that any visit to a Russian home may turn into an "injudicious" act fraught with serious consequences. For in this city to-day, everybody of whatever class or rank knows of at least one or two "examinations" or "house searchings"; and it has happened that whole apartment houses have been closed for hours while everything inside was turned topsy-turvy. Since no one seems inclined not to talk of such things, or at least not to whisper about them, there is also no one who is not thoroughly imbued with fright. The twenty people who were executed during the night of Thursday-Friday were swept together for their unhappy fate quite at random. But the next night, and still more energetically on the night after that, and so on down to now, arrests, searchings, examinations, were very systematic, till the overworked G.P.U. men were dropping from exhaustion. It must, in fact, be no easy task to enter a residence—that is to say, one among the thousands of one-room apartments into which Moscow is divided to-day—and within a prescribed time—too short a time—and remaining impeccably polite, open every book and shake it, glance over every bit

Moscow, June, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

of paper with writing on it, identify people, question them, arrest them, and then be off to another "job." These bright summer nights in Moscow are short; but to the Muscovites they seem as long as the winter nights of the Terror when the Revolution was in full swing. And in all the larger cities, from Moscow to Vladivostock, much the same thing is going on. Reports indicate special severities at Leningrad; but in Moscow too the number of arrests must have run into the thousands.

Is it a question of justice? There is adequate evidence that it is just another outbreak of politics: that is to say, the State is acting on grounds of self-preservation and without regard for legal rights or niceties. The State's Police received its "extraordinary powers" in a Kremlin manifesto of June 9th. This is not the moment to go into the question of legality. From time immemorial, *raison d'état* has never chosen to be disturbed by sentimentalities, by the criticism of persons directly or indirectly affected, or by the questions of third parties. That is the case here now. The people of the city either say nothing at all, or whisper softly and with the greatest circumspection. Once *raison d'état* gets in the saddle, it is very loath to get out again. Once in motion, it knows no bounds—it never "just wears out," as love does. Everyone knows and is thinking that; but people betray their thoughts only in their pale faces, their troubled expressions.

All the same, one may say that these arrests are being made, now on grounds of social opinions; now on grounds of the acquaintances a man may have had with people from the hostile bourgeois world—especially, of course, with Englishmen; now on grounds of suspicions long existing, of prison terms already served for political offences, of political "untrustworthiness"; now "just on a chance." "Anticipatory justice"! "Preventive measures"! But this "anticipatory justice" has been used by the State's Police for some six years past—ever since the Terror proper lost its point.

Can one really question its good effects? This "anticipatory justice" has enabled the Soviet Régime to convince everybody, absolutely everybody, who by birth or profession might seem to have a suspicious look, that the power of the Soviet is unattackable, unshakeable. Have not the leaders at the Kremlin,

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

as a result of its application, been able to walk the streets unguarded, down to a short time ago, and to appear within reach of anybody at public ceremonies? And now these terrifying arrests *en masse*, which seem to say that the bourgeoisie, and not only the bourgeoisie—everybody, has gone through that terrible school quite without avail!

We shall have to consider later on the consequences of these measures, the paralysing terror which they inspire everywhere. Here we may say a word about the executions, just to note to what extremes *raison d'état* may carry its privileges! The shooting of Dolgoruki was not an altogether crass affair. The man had not returned to Russia as a friend of the existing Régime. In his princely home in Moscow the Marx-Engel Institute now has the treasures, which he collected as a bibliophile, on public view. He was an enthusiast for freedom and democracy. When it was reported abroad that he had been shot, an official declaration was issued that he was in good health, and there was little doubt that he would be handled gently—romanticists are never taken seriously in Moscow! He was not shot, in fact, till after the Voikov murder! That was a harsh measure against a man seventy-eight years old; but, after all, it was understandable!

And yet, and yet . . . there are cases that speak as plainly as daylight, cases where, on Thursday night, people were shot who had never been arrested down to two hours before, who therefore had no chance to defend themselves, and with whom, down to the moment when the State needed their lives for its purposes, the State had not concerned itself at all, or whom, at the very least, it had not considered dangerous enough to keep under lock and key. From these undebatable cases it is permissible to draw conclusions as to the spirit of the example which has been set up here. These cases are object lessons of a *raison d'état* that knows no limits to its power and no mercy in its application. They are recommended to those students of political jurisprudence who are still not satisfied with the shooting of the Duc d'Enghien, or with Bismarck's prosecution of Arnim, or with the French prosecution of the Krupp people at Werden during the Ruhr occupation. There is no trace here of any concern about that

SOVIET RUSSIA

thing for which the blessings of justice exist, and for which, in the last analysis, the State exists: the human being. That some guilty people may also have been shot at this convenient moment has no bearing on the issue which is here in point.

The citizens of civilized countries have learned in the course of history that the State, with an obviousness which the State in particular has always stressed, is greater than the individual. For that reason one is in duty bound to ask what circumstances could have prompted the authorities of the Soviet Union to such acts of arbitrary violence.

A mine had been laid by the rupture with England! The murder of Voikov, the Soviet minister, at Warsaw, touched it off! That is the answer!

Lenin's teachings have become dogma among the Soviets. Lenin taught among other things that a war of the bourgeois world upon the proletarian State cannot be avoided. The people at the Kremlin took the severance of relations by England with outward calm, not to say with a certain disdain; but it was, after all, the long expected typhoon signal. The yellow ball was at once run up the flagstaff. The murder in Warsaw seemed to be the first eddy of the approaching whirlwind. So—to political danger to the Régime, physical danger to its leaders was added! On the same day, a thing almost unheard of under Communism occurred: a bomb was thrown in Leningrad. The authors of the crime, it is true, have so far not been detected! Again on the same day, at Minsk, there came what was apparently an attempt on the life of a subordinate official of the State's Police. That affair also has so far remained unexplained, and its significance is still clouded in mystery.

So—without warning, the sudden resolve to “anticipate,” at any price! If one was ever to be convinced, here was evidence enough that England was setting sinister forces in motion against the Soviet Union! Another thing: was it not probable that the people who are being tolerated, merely being used, in this country, the people, in other words, who are not proletarians, had taken immediate courage from the brusque action of England? Must not the conspirators and schemers among the *émigrés* who sit abroad barking at the

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

Red moon, writing letters to Russians inside the Soviet State and preaching ill-omen and disaster generally, have caught a breath of morning air and begun to stir about? Was it not to be taken for granted that England would try to undermine and crumple the Red Front from within, before taking the open field against the Kremlin? Had Churchill not compromised himself far enough with the spy-desperado, Reilly?

So—it was better to show once more, and in full force, that in this country, in which only workers and peasants have any rights, the workers and peasants do not tolerate the slightest resistance and do not forgive a man who gives the slightest reason for doubting his utter devotion and his utter submission. It is very probable that the reflections of the people at the Kremlin went beyond all this. In case of war they would need a convinced and an exasperated populace. The Kremlin's edict against England had the effect of rousing excitement against England; and then, twenty-four hours later, the public was shown the domestic enemy it would have to fight in fighting England.

The enemy is the same enemy he was in 1917. A published list describes him in crude and unmistakable terms: ex-officers of the Tsar; "big" land-owners under the old Régime; the treacherous, sabotaging bourgeoisie! The list was evidently compiled for the purpose of showing just whom England was trying to put back into power: the high aristocracy.

It may well be that the measures which have brought such terrible consequences were decided upon during the first moments of excitement. But, in any case, *raison d'état* had envisaged their true purpose and significance with absolute clarity from the very first.

THE "BOURGEOIS REMNANT"

(Moscow, June, 1927.)

What has been, what is still, going on, throws light on the innermost essence of present-day Sovietism of Russian stamp. But it is also not without effect upon it. In spite of all quibbling on the part of Europe, which seems, by reason of its immense age perhaps, unable to conceive of the rest of the world save as in the likeness of Europe, the Soviet State has all along

Moscow, June, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

been and still is exactly what it was at the beginning: a class State, a State belonging to factory workers and "poor" peasants. However, in addition to workers and peasants there are not a few other individuals in Russia who are being used, now for the economic, now for the otherwise technical, purposes of the Soviet system—men of the professional callings, men who know business and its methods, and even, though in decreasing numbers, army officers. There is some tolerance also of large-scale farmers, after several efforts at getting along without them.

There has come about, accordingly, a state of relative equilibrium between the elements surviving from the old order and the new rulers of Russia. It is an equilibrium of great artificiality. It arose through unilateral and easily revocable tolerances extended to the bourgeois remnant in the proletarian State, through concessions very carefully, much too carefully, measured. The balance, therefore, hangs uncannily on a razor's edge, though it has been manipulated with extraordinary and very consistent diplomacy and with a very original and very keen knowledge of human nature. In any event a *modus vivendi* worked itself out between Communists and bourgeois, between peasants and factory workers, and, in the rural districts further, between the *kulaks*, the owners of big farms, and the swarm of unpropertied peasants.

But why this "understanding" between the new powers and those survivals from the hated past who are being kept in political servitude? Because those "hang-overs" from the past are still necessary in technical spheres to the development of the Communist State; because, before Communism can proceed to their complete elimination, it must wait till they become superfluous, till all ability and all knowledge in Russia have become Red like the Revolution itself. Nevertheless, the Soviet State, in its present situation, rests upon its toleration of that remnant, upon that equilibrium, quite as much as it rests upon the strength of its revolutionary resolve. In the course of continued collaboration a thousand strands have been interwoven between bourgeoisie and "permanent" Revolution, and on those threads depends the daily life of Russia.

Now what is at present going on tangles the threads in

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

question, breaks up the rhythm of collaboration, throws the artful clockwork of Russian society out of gear, for the present, and for a long time to come. Can anyone fail to note the paralysing effect these violent procedures are having upon the efficiency of the classes which are the victims? Probably no State in the world has fewer dangerous enemies within its borders than the Soviet State, after these ten years of indefatigable "anticipation" conducted with every imaginable terror and violence. Only ten days ago the Soviet government and its representatives abroad were contending that the larger part of the bourgeoisie was actively collaborating with the Soviet State so far as such collaboration was desired. And now? Business men coming from abroad already observe that Russians not belonging to the government offices are hesitating, when not flatly refusing, to have anything to do with them. An omnipotent suspicion, well justified in view of the recent arrests, is extending into the remotest nooks and corners of the land. The Soviet State is too highly centralized not to feel such shocks. During the years of the Civil Wars, the Revolution was defended by most drastic measures. It is an error to assume that the work of reconstruction which has now been developing can be supported by the same terror. It is my opinion that the Revolution is damaging itself by the measures now being employed.

Nevertheless, it would seem that beginning with Stalin (who was not in Moscow during the critical week) and running all the way along to the extreme Opposition, there is not a Communist but feels that what has just been done has been well done, and necessarily. Must one perforce conclude that the gulf which separates the bourgeois world from this revolutionary State is unbridgeable? To judge by many of its utterances the Soviet government is loath to have people abroad draw any such conclusion.

RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND

(Moscow, early August, 1929.)

Dovgalevski, the Soviet ambassador in Paris, in succession to the brilliant Rakovski who now sits twirling his fingers in the Hotel Astoria at Saratov, has just paid a visit to London

Moscow, early August, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

to negotiate a resumption of Anglo-Soviet relations. Once more, therefore, the Second and the Third Internationals come together in those famous rooms at Whitehall which have witnessed so many historic conferences and sheltered so many different types of men. That the "first Socialistic State in the World" ought to maintain normal relations with an England under Labour rule is the declaration of the people who voted for MacDonald, and, after all, of all reasonable people the world over. So be it, therefore!

When MacDonald established connections with the Bolshevik Régime on a previous occasion, he first accorded recognition, and then was called upon to prick his fingers on many thorny matters in dispute. Moscow has remarked with some annoyance that this time he has adopted the opposite tack of negotiating first and recognizing afterwards. It is striking that the Soviet diplomats have long reckoned on the virtual certainty that he would do just that, and they have been acting accordingly.

Isvestia took the bull by the horns and explained shortly after MacDonald's return to power how simple it would be to resume relations. Each party names an ambassador and communicates his name to the other party! That would be the simplest and most rational procedure—any other would have its dangers! The whole problem should be reduced to its soberest terms—to a question of purely economic interests, especially those of England! Such the official keynote. Meantime, the Party Press, as distinguished from the government Press, emphasized that no one in Russia should imagine that MacDonald and his government were consenting to the expected rapprochement out of any love for the Socialist State. In cartoons and other forms of wit the "Socialist traitors" of England were lined up with the Socialist-Fascists of Germany. English "philanthropy" was decried as a screen behind which very practical motives lay hidden—domestic troubles, economic troubles, unemployment.

All this, of course, was designed by the Party Press for home consumption; but that the tactic was considered useful is a fact not without its bearing on foreign policy. Moscow did nothing to create the "proper atmosphere" for the

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

resumption of relations. In true Bolshevik manner the Kremlin trusted to the pressure of circumstances, and, in the end, was justified by the fact: the inquiry from the English government finally turned up one day!

But it came in no great hurry and in the form that was not desired in Moscow, though it had been all along expected. Henderson made known that he was willing to discuss ways and means whereby a resumption of relations could be effected. Propaganda and debts were expressly mentioned in this connection. Stalin himself had already removed the thorn from the debts question by defining the recognition of debts as a means of securing credits. The question of propaganda must therefore be regarded as the real difficulty now.

The moment is not altogether propitious. The Party which is ruling the Soviet Union happens again to be thinking of intensifying its world-wide activity for revolution. Competition, therefore, between the theoretical interests of the State and its strictly diplomatic policy is correspondingly keener. A Party inspired by such an outlook cannot be very eager to grant a "Reformist" government such as MacDonald's, any moral or other advantages in the resumption of relations which England broke off so rudely. This friction between two enormously complex groups of Soviet interests may perhaps explain why Stalin, during these last months, has been devoting himself more conscientiously than ever to the affairs of the Foreign Commissariat, which he had always followed with special attention. For one thing, he is learning German, as others of the leaders are doing.

In any case, an answer was given to England at some leisure, and when it was given, it was worded in a form that might easily have wrecked everything. By straining the meaning of Henderson's note to the limit, Moscow devised a way of interpreting it whereby the negotiator asked for would be required to discuss only the "order of business" to be followed at the coming negotiations, while the negotiations themselves would be left to the respective ambassadors when they should find themselves at their posts.

Replying to this, England has simply consented to a conference with the Soviet ambassador to France—nothing further.

Moscow, early August, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

Will she now, after all, as cannot prove difficult, extend the discussion of the "order of business" to a discussion of the "ways and means"—in other words, to debts and propaganda?

RUSSIA AND THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL
(Moscow, early August, 1929.)

In themselves, such by-plays of diplomacy can interest only those taking part in them at the moment. They do, however, throw light on the inner conflicts which are attending the Soviet-Labourite negotiations, and show how difficult it will be for these close relatives in *credo* and *verbum* to exchange the brotherly kiss which the world expects of them. Nothing more widely divides human beings than a common goal sought over opposite roads. Troubles arise much more easily then, than when the disagreement is absolute. Moscow, furthermore, is in the habit of turning differences of opinion into personal hatreds, and regards MacDonald with an aversion not readily understandable. This time, perhaps, the Soviet Press has dealt with him less roughly, as regards the forms, than was the case in 1924; but the actual hatred Russians have for him has only increased since that time. From a MacDonald Cabinet, least of all, would Moscow be pleased to have, in place of the unconditional recognition of 1924 made in a virtual race with other Powers, a limited recognition saddled with provisos and precautions. All this is subtly hinted in the Soviet note, the careful wording of which shows the marks of many polishing files. However keenly the Soviets may desire a resumption of relations, whether on economic grounds or as paving for the road to Washington, there is still room for doubt as to whether it can come about in view of the many handicaps that beset it.

Among these may be included not only the differences of opinion within the Party in Russia; and not only the natural tactical consideration that in the preliminary negotiations, which cannot be avoided, the position of Moscow will be more unfavourable if the dispatch of a British ambassador is made dependent on the progress made in the negotiations. The Soviet Union must also concern itself with a very fundamental question. As a government dealing with other

LOW TIDE IN SOVIET "WESTERN" POLICY

governments, the Union has always disclaimed responsibility for the revolutionary agitation emanating from Russian Communists. On the occasion of the "Zinoviev Letter," but also on general principles, MacDonald's government, no less than the others, has held Moscow answerable for the acts of the Komintern on English territory. The English note written at that time by Gregory has been designated by MacDonald, in reply to a most inconvenient question in Parliament from the Conservative side, as the basis for the coming negotiations. To be sure, in treaties made by the Soviet government with other countries, one frequently notes an ominous passage which enjoins the one party from interfering in the domestic affairs of the other party; but such formulæ evade the decisive question as to just what constitutes interference by the government. In comment on the Zinoviev letter, the Gregory note brought this question to precise terms. It hinted at the existence of a parallel straw-Régime within the Soviet Union, a fact which justified the query as to whether the Soviet government were "really in a position" to make treaties of the nature indicated. The question remained open, until the rupture of relations in 1927 gave a drastic and one-sided answer to it from the British Conservative point of view. Just before that, England had experienced a revolutionary movement directed against her position in China, as to the outcome of which no one is as yet in a position to prophesy. She had also been through two serious strikes, and noted the explicit and active interest taken by Moscow in them. But Moscow held doggedly to the principle that such matters are no affair of the Soviet government as such. All the less welcome now will it find a discussion of them set up as a prerequisite for normal relations.

The dyke that is holding the Bolshevist World Revolution to-day is formed, in several most interesting respects, less by the world bourgeoisie than by "Reformist," or "Evolutionary," Socialism. This movement is a sort of insulating wrapper that is drawn about the capitalistic system. It is the first to feel the effects of any progress in the direction of world revolution. That is why the brotherly kiss at Whitehall will be so difficult to exchange, though both parties are compelled to desire it.

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

FROM "COMMERCE BANK" TO "EXPORT BANK"
(Moscow, April, 1924.)

To a degree unusual anywhere else, the economic policy of the Soviet Union is evolving even to-day in a world of abstractions. Nevertheless, since the change to the NEP in 1921, it has had sufficient time to work out well-defined examples of its manner of doing, and these are often interesting and instructive.

I am thinking here of the case of the "Russian Commerce Bank," which was founded in the autumn of 1922 for purposes of foreign trade and general banking. It was a private bank. Its organizer was a Swede, Mr. Aschberg, who negotiated American credits for the Tsar's government during the War, stood close to the Soviet Régime from the very beginning, and came to enjoy sufficient confidence among the Soviet leaders to be admitted to private business activities in Russia on a large scale.

He opened a bank in the centre of Moscow, at a point where the Kusneki Most joins the Petrovka. It was earning profits within a very short time. Just now, at the instance of the State Bank, it has passed into the hands of the Foreign Trade Commissariat, which was coming to feel urgent need of an institution of the kind, but one conforming to the special requirements of the Monopoly of Foreign Trade.

No doubt is any longer possible that the foreign trading system of the Soviets is considerably more effective to-day than its Western critics, trained in exclusively private commerce, at first thought it could ever become. The far from satisfactory development of Russia's domestic economy has furnished more and more grounds for the maintenance of the Monopoly from the strictly business

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

point of view, quite aside from the Communistic ideas which prompted its founding and its energetic expansion in the beginning, and which still guard it as jealously as ever.

The effect of the Monopoly on the privately managed "Russian Commerce Bank" was, however, negative. The Bank was of course deprived of all opportunities for independent trade with foreign countries toward which its interests were originally directed. From the point of view of the Foreign Trade Monopoly, it shortly made itself felt as a troublesome competitor; for, as the monopolistic principles asserted themselves with increasing comprehensiveness and vigour, a private banking organization could only be considered dangerous. However, the Bank's exchange activities with foreign countries remained vigorous, and increased in volume; but its financing of imports and exports encountered greater and greater difficulties, till the complete merger of the Bank with the organization of the Foreign Trade Monopoly became a matter of necessity.

The Bank then tried to do business in the domestic field; but here too it found itself in competition with State enterprises and hampered by the "superintending power" which the State exercised upon it. The State continues to feel itself vitally interested in holding the "commanding heights" of business; and in competition with the State the purely economic calculations and speculations of a private institution either cannot hold their own at all, or can do so only with the greatest difficulty. In view of the continuing effects of the War and the years of revolution, and the enormous and constantly increasing shortage of capital in Russia, one might defend a theory that the State must undertake to prevent mistakes and catastrophes with means not available to private enterprise. But it is none the less true that Soviet administration and methods are to-day still too undeveloped in point of organization, and still too inexperienced in business, to do anything of the kind. State enterprise is at once too centralized and too bureaucratic to enable enterprises based on private capital, such as the "Commerce Bank," to attain success in the fields to which they are confined. At the same time it is

SOVIET RUSSIA

unable to do anything important in those fields by its own efforts. So, in the domestic sphere as previously in the foreign sphere, the "Commerce Bank's" prospects dropped off after rising steadily for a few months. Here too the State insisted on absolute conformance to its own needs. For example, the interest policies of the Bank, as regards credits and loans, had to be changed. Interest rates were at first regulated by money demand. Then the State, in its rôle as banker, fixed them by law at a lower level.

The "Russian Commerce Bank" is now, as regards 70 per cent. of its stock, in the hands of the "Vnetchtorg." The other 30 per cent. go to its former competitor, the "State Bank." There is a report that the original owner made an effort to retain a share in it, but without success. The name of the Bank also has been changed: it is now the "Russian Export Bank."

It might occur to someone to draw extreme conclusions from this failure of an originally promising venture in private enterprise in Russia. Certain conclusions are obvious enough; but people close to things here do not think that all of them need necessarily be negative. Mr. Aschberg himself is not of that opinion. In order to succeed in Russia a business man must correctly gauge the drift of Soviet domestic policy. That policy tends toward controlling key positions in business; and in view of the great dearth of capital in the country at present, banking is one of those key positions. This tendency on the part of the Soviet government has not weakened. It existed, with the unavoidable compromises, even in the springtime of the NEP, though without, at that time, the severities in application which it assumed with the progressive stabilization of Soviet power.

THE CONCESSIONS

(Moscow, December, 1926.)

On November 23rd, 1920, five months before the NEP was proclaimed, a Decree called "General Economic and Legal Regulations for the Assignment of Concessions" was published. It had been under advisement before the Council of People's Commissars for "over a year." The Decree, there-

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

fore, was in no sense originally conceived as an introduction to the NEP; and as late as January, 1921, Lenin was publicly dismissing the notion that the government was considering the admission of native-born Russians to private concessions, and to the business practices that go with concessions.

This previous history of foreign concessions in Russia shows that the Soviet government expected that they would cause an influx of capital and creative talent from abroad, without any untoward reactions in the field of domestic politics and possibly with many advantages for the Soviet Union in foreign countries. When, then, in February, 1921, the transition was made from "War Communism," as it was called, to capitalistic methods, and a certain recovery of the bourgeoisie was permitted because unavoidable, the leaders were convinced that by that action a heavy mortgage had been laid on any further development toward the Socialistic State. On the other hand, only through this change did the decree on concessions acquire a practical meaning: without a restoration of business to a money basis it would have remained inapplicable.

Only when some "recess" in the advance toward the Socialistic goal had been provided for, as actually happened with the NEP, could the foreign concessionary in Soviet Russia find the conditions necessary for existing. At the same time he could count on being more palatable to the proletarian State than the private capitalist or business man of native birth, who would be struggling not only for his profits, but for social and—who could tell?—some day, perhaps, for political position as well. For both forms of "recess," the one for the native capitalist and the other for the foreigner, Lenin's warning to the Party held equally good. After all, he said, the activities permitted by the NEP would prove practicable only to those interests which subordinated themselves absolutely to the gradual development of the State toward pure Communism, the ideal that was never to be lost from view. As well as the Nepman, therefore, the foreign concessionary existed in Soviet Russia only so far as he contributed to those forces which the Socialist State cannot do without and progress.

SOVIET RUSSIA

To such currents of thought with their numerous corollaries every concessionary should have accustomed himself before making the great leap. That was a comfortable procedure for only a very few, however. In most cases concessions were sought and accepted on some individually evolved theory as to the future course of events in Russia—for, of course, the country would gradually work its way back to Western methods! Unfortunately, the routine thinking and the routine business methods of the West were not able to grasp the questions which the Soviet State was posing in its remoter objectives and in its outlook on life.

To-day there is dissatisfaction on both sides. How is it, say the Soviet leaders from their point of view, that before the War billions were invested in Russia; whereas to-day, after five years of opportunity to place money advantageously, at the most 50, at the very most 60, millions of roubles have put in an appearance? To be sure, in one single year, the year 1924, 335 applications for concessions came from Germany alone. These represented about one-half of the total number of applications from all sources—over 700. How much time and money, how much energy and good temper, have been expended on both sides during all this period—and to what little purpose!

Such a slow rate of development need not, I believe, necessarily be explained by the fact that the fortunes of the concessions actually granted have not on the whole been such as to form a great inducement to further investments of foreign capital. It is a mere matter of record that the German concessions have with few exceptions been exploited at great losses, losses which for the most part they could not carry themselves and for which they have themselves been only partly responsible. All the agrarian concessions have had to be either reorganized or recapitalized in full. The one really extensive German enterprise in Russia, the lumber concession on the Mologa, is still carrying on under great difficulties. Two or three small manufacturing concerns are enjoying relative prosperity because they happen to deal with commodities indispensable to State business. A few others, of a different nature, are hanging on, or were until recently

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

hanging on, in the hope of covering present deficits from future earnings. But considered in their present status the average of all German concessions shows a loss; and if we move beyond the German sphere we do not get an essentially different picture. Harriman's manganese concession in Tchiaturi needed only sixteen months to understand that it could not succeed under prevailing conditions. The English in the Lena Gold Fields are also discouraged, it seems. The Mologa, the Harriman, and the Lena concessions are the largest in Russia. I will say nothing about the multitude of concessions made to other nationalities which have had to be given up altogether.

This survey is not encouraging. The reasons for the situation—which, I again repeat, is as painful to the one side as to the other—are most interesting.

One of them has long been familiar: inadequate knowledge on the part of the concessionaries of the conditions under which their concessions had to be worked in Russia. Harriman, for example, was not aware that at Nikopolis there were manganese deposits the development of which was certain to disturb his calculations; and many similar cases could be cited. A large concession was taken by Germans for producing wheat on land that could be used only for pasturing sheep. Such things should, of course, not happen, and the responsibility, I again repeat, rests on all concerned. For the most part the projects are suggested to the concessionaries by the State; and both the State, and not merely the concessionary, should have been perfectly certain as to just what business was to be done and could be done. That the Concessions' Office in the Government should exact of concessionaries terms which it knew could not be met would be—quite aside from the ethical question—to nobody's interest, least of all its own.

A very difficult item, in connection with which the greatest caution cannot avoid surprises, is the matter of the so-called "social burdens." They are very heavy, though in this respect nothing is asked of concessionaries, on the whole, that is not asked of State enterprises. But it is usually overlooked that the Trades' Unions are relatively independent of the State and may make demands not provided for in contracts

SOVIET RUSSIA

with the State. Such demands have increased by leaps and bounds during the last half-year. The large concessions have had to declare their readiness, in principle, to make lavish expenditures on housing for workingmen. Such burdens weigh upon them in a quite different manner than upon the State enterprises. The latter are in a position to evade exorbitant demands, because they are part of, and one with, the proletarian State. That the Russians are conscious of this distinction is indicated by the fact that higher paid workmen and all clerks of the concessions have been excepted from the advantages gained by the Trades' Unions as regards questions of placement, dismissal, and wage tariffs. The Trades' Unions feel, at bottom, that their interest and those of the State enterprises are identical; while the concession, in spite of the special protection it enjoys as a guest of the proletarian State, is thought of as representing an enemy system. Only about 180,000 hands are employed in non-State enterprises in Soviet Russia, in private factories, in other words, or on concessions. About a third of these are working for foreign concessions. This number has no weight whatever as compared with the six million workers proper who are enrolled in the Trades' Unions. At the last Trades' Unions Congress it was voted to cling to the "golden mean" in the pressure which is being used upon private employers. This policy hits the concessions also. Statistics from strictly industrial enterprises show that the so-called "social burdens" amount to about 40 per cent. of the total wages paid. But the Trades' Unions are in a position to increase "social burdens" as well as wages whenever they see fit—and they are showing a disposition to exercise this privilege more and more frequently in connection with their policy, which is based on many considerations, of exacting better and better terms even from the State. In any case, this situation was never gone into thoroughly on either side in making the concessions' contracts. It has often destroyed the fundamental assumptions on which the contracts were based.

But the most involved question at present as regards matters of principle, is undoubtedly that of "transfer," so-called. For some months past Soviet Russia has surrounded herself

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

with a water-tight embargo on the export, and even on the import, of money. The concessions have at present an unlimited right to export their profits up to 20 per cent. of the invested capital, or 6 per cent. of their turnover. This stipulation has no great significance at the present time, because there are no profits. But the embargo is constantly complicating the purchases of raw materials and equipment made by the concessions abroad, and also the expenditures of foreign credits within Russia. The repayment of such productive debts encounters the greatest difficulties ; because, unless the point happens to have been specifically covered in the contracts, foreign debts can be paid from receipts in Russia only through the goodwill of the people in the Concessions' Office or the State Bank. Cash transactions on the part of the concessions, meantime, are becoming extremely difficult because of the situation in currency. For understandable reasons the State Bank insists on parity of exchange between foreign money and Russian money. But as a matter of fact latest reports show that the actual value of the rouble in Russia has fallen by about half. It is obvious how difficult it must be to make ends meet when any payment made abroad or in Russia must represent a loss of 50 per cent. This remains true even in view of the high profits that may be indicated in the book-keeping of a concern, as a result of the inflation. The German concessions in particular are criticized for trying to work with too little capital. But low or high as it may be, any capital investment must be looked upon as halved at the present time. In the end this fact automatically decides the fate of many concessions, though it may not be apparent at once.

The decline in currency values, with the rise in prices corollary to it, exerts a crippling effect in many different ways. Many concessions' contracts provide that goods must first be offered to the State at world market prices. These, taking the rouble at parity, are often much lower than Russian prices, and so a provision originally protective in theory has fatal consequences for the concessionary.

Such financial complications lead to a conclusion that is universally valid : that one cannot, even in small part, guard oneself by contract against all the specific difficulties that

SOVIET RUSSIA

may arise in a country like Soviet Russia. The concessionary must simply understand that he is just a cog in the general economic machine and must suffer or prosper as the machine as a whole thrives. Every concession, for example, feels the unfavourable effects if private business in one sense or another is restricted; for the concession itself cannot help falling under the State's buying or selling boycott. In the same way, every financial crisis in the State enterprises reacts on the concession. Another thing to be borne in mind is a specific legal principle on which the Soviet State is working: that in bankruptcy proceedings State enterprises, including the State Bank, have precedence over all other creditors whatsoever.

There is no way of foreseeing all such details and providing safeguards against them.

On the Russian side, further, people say quite openly that one can look on contracts concluded three years ago only with misgiving; and they add that without a doubt contracts that are being made to-day will seem equally ingenuous three years hence. From this, it would seem, two conclusions at least should follow. In the first place, the contracts should not be interpreted in too literal a manner. The concessionary should have the largest possible freedom to make use of the experience he gains in actually exercising his concession. The Germans found it an amusing curiosity of Soviet life that long and complicated negotiations were necessary before an obligation to grow wheat could be changed into permission to graze sheep. In the second place, as all testimony seems to indicate, concessions' contracts should be regarded less as legal instruments than as programmes for enterprise in which both parties are equally interested. Then it would be a simple matter to come to understandings, step by step, and on the basis of actual facts, as to the most profitable courses to be followed. This would be a much better system than simply to prove in court that a contract has been broken or that it cannot be fulfilled, with all the unpleasant and costly consequences that follow. It is perfectly understandable that, in view of the strained economic situation and of past experiences in awarding concessions, people at the Concessions' Office should be growing exceedingly wary now, and are even

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

showing a disposition to be severe. It is said that henceforth they contemplate fixing in advance the amount of capital a concessionary is to invest. To which one need simply reply that that is not the way to attract capital into the country. During the quarrel with the Opposition not long ago, *Izvestia* declared that the concessions were proving of scant worth to Soviet Russia, since their only effect was to take money out of the country. A very interesting remark! Up to the present time, certainly, they have been bringing more in than they have taken out, and the fact has not proved beneficial to the credit of the Soviet Union. The idea of the concessions is sound; and it remains so even if the dogma as to the unlimited capacities of a Socialist system to develop in a world controlled by quite different methods continues to prevail. However, for the future of the concessions' plan it will be necessary courageously to face all the conclusions that are to be drawn from the experiences each side has had in the past.

CONCESSIONS AND THE TRADE BALANCE

(Moscow, April, 1929.)

If to-day, as was the programme seven years ago, 600 million roubles in foreign capital were to be invested in the form of concessions on Soviet territory, they would prove to be more of a burden than a relief to Soviet business. I take it for granted in making this statement that the capacity of Soviet Russia to do business in foreign markets depends essentially on the excess of Soviet exports over imports. Supposing, as we may legitimately suppose, that the minimum profit of a concession investment be placed at 20 to 30 per cent., then the yearly dividends would amount to 120-180 million roubles. Under the conditions at present prevailing, and which will continue to prevail for some years, the payment of such dividends would be excessively dangerous to the present stability of Soviet currency, since the concessions also make considerable demands on currency in procuring all sorts of foreign commodities necessary for doing business. The increasing difficulty of procuring cash constitutes one of the weakest points in the mechanism of Soviet business. In the negotiations with the wealthy American, Henry Ford, his

Moscow, April, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

willingness not to withdraw his profits from the Soviet Union for a period of years is said to have played a part of no little importance. The report is significant. In any case, the leaders of Soviet business have always acted with the greatest caution in accepting credits, as well as in awarding concessions. The maintenance of Soviet liquidity in foreign markets has always been a most important consideration with them. Even so, the situation has grown very tense since the dropping off in wheat exports. That is why, as things now stand, definite limits have been set to the extension of concessions' grants. The astonishing series of concessions' opportunities which have been dangled before the eyes of the world since the summer of 1928 have therefore had, primarily, a pedagogical significance—they were intended to attract the attention of surrounding countries to the potential wealth that is strewn about on Russian soil.

Early in 1928 the claims of existing concessions on Soviet finance provoked a movement, which originated inside the Party, to do away with the concessions' system altogether. 130 per cent. of the capital investments of existing concessions had left the country in the form of profits within a period of three years! Was this "bleeding" of the Soviet organism balanced by the advantages of this kind of foreign assistance? As a result the awarding of concessions was made more rational. Only "necessary" concessions should be granted, concessions having a direct bearing on the general economic plan and such, if possible, as produced commodities for export. No further production of "fancy goods"—a category that embraces many, many things in Soviet Russia! Concessions should contribute in the most varied ways to the productive capacities of the country, not to the demands of everyday consumption. The expenditures hitherto made on concessions ought henceforth to be considered only from the viewpoint of general national economy. So much for the future.

At the present time many concessions already exist. Things, therefore, cannot be made altogether to conform to this thought. It none the less shows to what extent and how constantly the question of currency has concerned the govern-

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

ment offices. The State, to be sure, has a share in the profits in all cases, and it has shown an inclination of late to raise its percentage of turnover. Nevertheless, it is making apparent efforts, whenever books are being audited to-day, to reduce profits, since it must provide the currency for their payment abroad. But even in cases of trifling sums, which a concessionary may desire to send abroad for some purchase connected with his business, all sorts of hindrances are placed in his way—and they are to be explained only by the same worry on the part of the government as to its scant holdings of foreign currency. Remittances home by foreigners employed on concessions are pared down as low as possible, or, more often, in cases where contracts make no provisions in the premises, they are simply embargoed. Not a few complications arise in connection with cash payments for raw materials.

The cash "transfer," in fact, is the most considerable obstacle to the development of the concessions' system. From the viewpoint of the concessionary, it is the depreciation of his capital that hurts. As it is changed into roubles, which can be done only through Soviet banks and on a basis of parity for the rouble with gold, 60 per cent. of it is likely to vanish. One might even wonder how business is possible at all with such debilitation of capital investments. The answer is that if concessions made by the Soviet Union prosper at all, they prosper marvellously. To be sure, it has been the habit of the Concessions' Office recently to regard net earnings of "only" 20-30 per cent. as adequate. Any excess over that is taxed at such rapidly rising rates that only under most exceptional circumstances could a capital profit of 50 per cent. be realized. But even the 20 or 30 per cent. profit is, in absolute terms, high; and for people with steady nerves and strong stomachs it may offer inducements.

I must not be suspected of a willingness to pour out the baby along with the bath. I have in mind the case of a manufacturing concession which has now been working in Russia for six years, producing virtually without competition a commodity of vital importance to Soviet industry. It has just paid out as net profits 25 per cent. of its overturn, a dividend that is 200 per cent. of its capital investment. The

SOVIET RUSSIA

example would seem to prove that a concession, well selected, planned with an exact appreciation of all circumstances and conditions, even of many that may seem unimportant, and provided, finally, with plenty of capital, has excellent prospects. I can think of other concessions that have no reason to complain, some of them concessions which, for the reasons stated above, are no longer popular with the Régime.

But Soviet business is still organizing. It is still full of youthful ambitions, flavoured with a certain amount of jealousy. It is a critical moment for any manufacturing concession when Soviet industry can say to itself: "We can do that too!" Less exposed to such fluctuations, possibly, are exploitations of natural resources, located far from the great cities and from industrial centres where the political activity of the Party is intense—lumber and mining concessions, for instance, or public service enterprises, such as electric power or water supply. It should not be overlooked that the many contracts for "technical assistance" that are now being signed are in certain respects to be regarded as substitutes for concessions. In making the concessions originally the Russians hoped that they would afford technical assistance and give the Russians a much needed experience.

We must not forget that some seventy-two concessions are in actual operation in the Soviet Union and that the far larger part of them will continue operating in spite of many surprising adventures. As to how many have "given up," and with what losses, no exact figures are at present available.

Concessions investments represent to-day some 50,095 millions in roubles. Swedish interests account for 10 millions of these. It is doubtful whether the German share exceeds 5 or 6 millions. The only really large German concession was the Mologa-Less lumber venture, the spectacular liquidation of which cannot allow the misadventures of the early organizers, whether they were, or were not, altogether responsible for them, to be forgotten. The Germans have twelve concessions, all told; then come the Japanese with eleven (fisheries, and the Sakhalin concession), the English with eight, and the Americans with seven. These figures

FOREIGN TRADE, CREDITS, CONCESSIONS

show that Russia is not just a gold mine being plundered by Germany, and that other countries, with more powerful capital resources, are getting away with the lion's share.

The gross value of concession products amounts to about 125 million roubles annually.

While considering difficulties and risks, facts such as the above should not be ignored. But if new concessions of any great extent are contemplated, it should be borne in mind that, in view of the caution the Soviet authorities have manifested in the past, it is doubtful whether sufficient opportunities will be granted to the concessionary to place him consistently in the monetary enjoyment of his labour and to maintain the conditions essential to profitable activity.

CHAPTER V

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

A FEW FUNDAMENTALS

(Moscow, early April, 1924.)

At the risk of wounding Europe's self-esteem, which is still very considerable, Russian policy is groping toward the East, not toward the West. Soviet Russia wants to use Europe. Soviet Russia is convinced that Europe will allow herself to be used—and there are plenty of indications big and little that Soviet Russia is justified in so believing. In the West, Soviet Russia is warily manœuvring to guarantee her security against attack from Europe, and at the same time to engineer a transfusion of economic blood from Europe, taking good care that the blood so received contains no germ of deleterious character.

But toward Asia Soviet Russia just abandons herself without restraint! Asia kindles her imagination. In Asia she sees the stairs up which she can climb over Europe. In Asia she senses the great open spaces which the Russian character seems somehow to need. Soviet Russia considers herself unchanged as a revolutionary power. Looking at the proletariat of Europe, she thinks of herself as an "elder" comrade. Looking at the multitudes of the East, islands of humanity in India and China rising from the gigantic flood of Asiatic savagery, she thinks of herself as the teacher and the torch-bearer, a rôle which she will continue to fill for years and years to come. In Asia the Russian's instinctive love of plans and programmes senses a field of action far less encumbered than the cramped areas of Europe already so "set" in their ways. Soviet policy, two-headed by nature—revolutionary and diplomatic at one and the same time—can run its course in Asia with much greater freedom than in a shrewd and wide-awake Europe.

It was just after the Wars of Intervention that Soviet

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

Russia discovered Asia; and in the first flash of a barely perceptible surplus of strength, she launched a national-cultural policy in Asia, which, next after the establishment of the Socialist Dictatorship on Russian soil, is the greatest novelty that the Pan-Slavic Revolution has so far brought forth.

Russia's hope of allying herself against the Western Powers with the Nationalist Régime in Angora was not realized. To be sure, what the two countries had really in common still survives as a bond between them; but the double nature of Soviet policy—incarnate in those Siamese twins called the Komintern and the Soviet State—manifested itself too clearly, especially at the beginning. No country was ever so ploughed and cross-ploughed during the War as the Iranian Plateau: Turks, Germans, Russians, Englishmen! England seemed to be the only one to survive, and for some years she revelled in the luxury of believing herself mistress of the Near East. She sat herself down in Baku and Enzeli. Her airplanes circled above Astrakhan and dropped bombs on the city when in that mood.

Then the English flood gradually receded. The Persians took over the newly built military roads out of Mesopotamia, and without compensation—simply inviting the English otherwise “to pick them up and carry them home.” With some hesitation Persia then repudiated the protectorate of England, and Russians and Englishmen were again fighting openly and in secret in Teheran for the controlling influence over that land of beauty. Soviet Russia had come in on the heels of England. They both now agreed on a gradual evacuation of Persia. The present situation is not far different from the one prevailing before the Anglo-Russian partition agreement of 1907, which created a Northern, Russian, and a Southern, English, sphere of influence. North Persia is naturally dependent on South Russia—the Caucasus.

But the restoration of Russia's influence in Persia ran aground on the inflexibility of her system of foreign trade monopoly. Moscow, accordingly, made concessions, which she would never have dreamed of making to Westerners. Persian merchants appeared at the fair in Nishni-Novgorod
Moscow, early April, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

to buy and sell directly there. But this experiment ended in dissensions and arrests ; and commercial relations with Soviet Russia and the friendly feelings that accompany them have had to recover very gradually since.

But Russia holds trumps to offset these episodes which caused feelings to run so high. In North Persia the system of large-scale landholdings by "land barons" has spread, owing to the severe agrarian crisis that has been devastating those territories cut off for years from all markets. Persians formerly working farms in their homeland wandered away in throngs to the oil-fields in the Caucasus, just as they did in the days of the Tsars. They went as far away as Astrakhan and the coasts of the Black Sea. Such fugitives were open to Communistic doctrines and they are now taking them back to Persia. But of greater and more direct importance for Soviet penetration is the "National-democratic" element in the Persian cities. That is a real bourgeoisie educated in Europe, an "intellectual" class imbued with a national consciousness in our Western sense of the term, and with a corresponding lack of sympathy for uninvited foreign guests. Persia is now under the dictatorship of a strong and significant personality—Rhiza Khan, who gained control of Parliament and dethroned the Shah. On the whole, one may say, the self-respect of the country rose against the Oriental tradition of a Parliament subservient to foreign bribes. On these forces Soviet Russia has erected a policy which she is now extending over all Asia : a programme for the "national" independence of all Asiatic States.

As has been the case with all her policies, Soviet Russia has made great sacrifices to further this one. She has cancelled all the concessions formerly owned by Russians, and the "capitulations" guaranteeing consular courts. She has written off all debts. On this "moral" basis, Russia is hoping to wrest superiority in Persia from the "power-policy" of the English, who continue to work with overwhelming material resources. In London Soviet Russia will plead for the "liberation" of Persia, and she will advert to the example which she has set herself. And in London Soviet Russia will plead for all Asia in the same sense.

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

“DECOLONIALIZATION” AND “NATIONALIZATION”
(Moscow, early April, 1924.)

This policy has given Soviet Russia a foothold even in Afghanistan, a feudal State autocratically ruled. It was no accident that after Afghanistan's war of independence against India she was first recognized as a country by Soviet Russia, and was the first to recognize Soviet Russia as a country. As a result of the war Kabul became a diplomatic centre. Moscow can also point to Afghanistan when desirous of showing that the conduct of that country harmonizes with the Kremlin's conception of the fundamental tendencies of the Asiatic peoples: “decolonialization,” “nationalization.”

Farther toward the East the frontiers are more and more perceptibly in motion. The Russian domain is feeling its way into half-fluid forms of States and State-structures that are hardly to be discovered with a magnifying glass and seem to hang suspended in void. With such peoples, Russia is using a tactic that might be described as the “localization” of her foreign policy. Moscow pushes her local authorities forward along her frontiers. Chinese Turkestan (Sinkiang) is to-day independently negotiating treaties of commerce and defence with Tashkent, the “Socialist Soviet Republic of Turkestan,” which is also acting independently in this case. Soviet Russia allows national affinities to speak, and speaks through them. Russian Turkestan, in fact, occupies a very influential position as regards Central Asiatic questions. Similarly the Buriats, along Lake Baikal, are enjoying an autonomy that is to have its effects in Mongolia. Soviet Russia is taking on such nurselings even in the West. She has just increased the territory of the “Autonomous Soviet Republic of White Russia” with a view to sentimental effects on the Ukrainian population in the Polish Ukraine. An “Autonomous Russian Armenia” is bordering on Turkish Armenia. On “behalf of Bessarabia” the Soviets are organizing a “Soviet Moldavian Republic.”

This is a policy of anticipations carried on over a vast territory, and justified in fact by the example of the Far Eastern Republic, which, last year, after sufficient Soviet propaganda and the evacuation of Vladivostok by Japan, returned voluntarily to Soviet Russia.

Moscow, early April, 1924

SOVIET RUSSIA

Though Soviet Russia has impressed her stamp on the governmental system of Mongolia, she could hardly wish Mongolia to follow the road of the Far Eastern Republic. What Moscow has given to Mongolia since the collapse of Ungern-Sternberg, the most romantic and significant personality on the White side during the period of the Interventions, is a very heterogeneous combination of Western political ideas, forms of Red dictatorship, and Central Asiatic instincts. The official, the legal, government is, in all form, a variety of English constitutionalism. The country, however, is ruled *de facto* by a Soviet dictatorship with a one party system. This one party calls itself "national-democratic." Around it swarm a host of not very appreciative, in fact of very subordinate, chieftains, whose ambitions are held in check by the bayonets of a Red army. Over all hovers the spirit of "the living Buddha"! The sum total, nevertheless, has been pacification and good order. So much so that German merchants have been attracted to the region—since the German route to the Far East is more and more inclined to traverse the stations of Russian Asia that radiate from the splendidly managed Siberian railroad as an axis.

In the year 1920 the domain controlled by the Moscow government had shrunk by a third of the old European Russia, to say not a word of what was going on in Asia. Now after six years of danger and menace Soviet policy is in full advance in all parts of the East, a drive for influence and "penetration" that is developing with strong and reckless assertions of power and is governed by a judicious shrewdness that is not always so noticeable, and is often lacking altogether, in Russia's dealings with the West. This activity, or this desire to be active, embraces the whole of Asia. Soviet policy regards India and China quite as much the objects of her artful diplomacy as the more primitive border states, though perhaps not with the same purposes of direct expansion. In both countries one notes the usual bifurcation of "sympathies." India has shot rapidly upwards as an industrial country, since and as a result of the War. She has huddled ten millions of factory workers into her cities, and news reports speak of strikes in Bombay and

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

other places. Ten millions of proletarians! And along with them a liberal, self-conscious bourgeoisie, imbued with sentiments of Asiatic nationalism and regarding England as a competitor. And then, a class of "intellectuals," partly made up of ex-proletarians! In all these groups Soviet Russia detects potentialities favourable to bringing about things which she hopes to see brought about in Asia.

And China offers much the same picture. Everywhere, and notably in Shanghai, one notes a growing and aggressive proletariat! A railroad strike last year had to be suppressed by violence—it was of Communistic origin. And not so long ago the Nationalist "intellectuals" of Peking were parading for an alliance between China and Soviet Russia and against foreign meddling and intervention. The Russians are foreigners, too; but the word for "Bolshevist" in Chinese means "friend of men." Effective in China are the readiness manifested by the Soviets to deal with China on a footing of equality, and the pose of Soviet Russia as a dispenser of freedom through self-sacrifice. As everywhere else in Asia, the Soviet government has cancelled, on its own behalf, and in the name of its subject States, all former concessions, all former debts, and the consular capitulations. The Eastern Chinese railway is the one exception. It, too, had been given back, but this sacrifice was rescinded afterwards. Russia holds both ends of the railroad, and would like to control its entire length. Manchuria is to-day as much a bone of contention between Russia and Japan as it was in the old days. There is no doubt on that point; nor of the fact that Russia is adopting a purely defensive attitude against a pressure toward expansion which Japan unavoidably feels, and of which the Russians are being made aware with special emphasis in Sakhalin. China is weak. She is kept weak purposely by the Great Powers. If China were able, she would be glad to use Soviet Russia as a bolt to hold together what she is afraid may fall apart if she is left to herself. To her rôle as the protector of China Soviet Russia is properly attaching the greatest importance. If she succeeds in retaining it, it will prove, in its effects, to be a most solid cement for binding Russian Asiatic policy together over its whole gigantic extent.

SOVIET RUSSIA

THE "UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST"
(Moscow, early April, 1924.)

Typical of the methods of Soviet policy in Asia was the founding of the "University of the East" to develop national sentiments in the Asiatic peoples and at the same time to bind them to Moscow. Soviet Russia is trying to give to the illiterate, backward peoples of Asia, and within the boundaries of Russia as well as on their own territories, their language, their alphabet, and their literature, and so to lay the foundations for a sense of their nationality and to create the raw materials for that great federation of Asia for which the All-Russian Soviet Union is both prototype and underpinning. The University is attracting young people of talent from all parts of Russia and Asia and shaping their notions of life. The Communist conception of the future relationship between Europe and Asia is formulated in an expectation that the highly developed proletariat in Europe will "educate the masses of Asia up to its own level," just as to-day the Russian factory hand is carrying Communistic ideas to the *monzhi* in the rural villages.

This, of course, is looking a long way ahead. For the moment the immediate task, and the much more important one, is to establish sympathetic contacts with those political currents in Asia which describe themselves as "National-democratic." Those currents are rapidly gaining headway. We find them operative in remote corners such as Mongolia. As a matter of fact, the Russians are willing to ally themselves with any kind of nationalism, even nationalisms of religious or theocratic colouring; for their outlook is primarily diplomatic. The object is to build up a "natural influence" for Russia by forcing back the great sea Powers which have penetrated inland from the coasts and gained positions of economic and military superiority, when not actually of political dominion, in Asia. And the Russians think they can do this by using forces that are preferably "spiritual."

The general applicability of this policy, its power of penetration both within and beyond the boundaries of the giant empire, its rapid growth and already very complicated mechanism—in a word, its success—are all the more remarkable

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

in that it has been carried out with "new" men, or rather with a new kind of man. In Federalized Asiatic Russia one notes a complete break with the method of selecting a "ruling class" that has already become traditional in European Russia—a selection by Moscow from the ranks of the Party. In Asia there is no proletariat, nor any class corresponding to a proletariat. In place, therefore, of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, we find, *de facto*, a Dictatorship of Intellectuals, an *intelligentsia* communistically minded, of course. That is the situation in Siberia, in Turkestan, in China, Armenia, and the Caucasus. It is the situation in far-away Mongolia. This Asiatic *intelligentsia* governs with threefold reference to the idea of Moscow, to the strategic and diplomatic advantage of Soviet Russia, and to the adaptation of these to the "interests of Asia."

When Europeans are not getting excited about the mystery of the East, clad now in Buddhistic, now in other kinds of trappings, they sometimes find time to speak, and with some alarm, of the "awakening of the East." Soviet Russia rules on the threshold of the East, all the way from Moscow to Vladivostok. She seems not to be at all afraid of the "awakening" in question. And the success of her policy is impressive!

THE MANCHURIAN QUESTION (Tokio, April, 1926.)

Japan's present policy is a policy of "waiting." Japan is waiting for the time when China will have quieted down enough to "open up," or allow herself to be "opened up." But when will that time come? Japan is further hoping for the recuperation of business in her Asiatic markets. But that too is by no means a certain hope. If trade and traffic at last begin to bloom in Japan some day, if the population of Japan, some day, finds on its hands more work than it can do, then and then only will the present policy of Japan have found its justification. But if the country cannot maintain its industrial expansion while the factory continues to "produce children," then the search for remedies must turn in other directions, to keep pace not only with the depression in business but

SOVIET RUSSIA

with the social tension that accompanies it. The Japanese conservatives are already seeing signs of social disintegration everywhere; and the catastrophe is being furthered by political scandals in high or prominent circles, such as have again come to light. Under these circumstances danger of a "preventive war" must be taken into account; for considerations both foreign and domestic are working together in that direction most alluringly. They might become compelling.

The Japanese are at the present time exercising in Manchuria and in China a self-restraint that is incredible rather than extreme! Their idea seems to be to avoid irritating Chinese nationalism, the strength of which they appear to estimate more accurately than many others. But what if China now disappoints everybody's expectations as a commercial outlet? What if she turns more and more radical, and in the measure of her radicalism draws nearer and nearer to Soviet Russia, which, as regards propaganda, is behaving in one way in Peking and in quite another way in Tokio? In all these cases, would it not be better to "make things clear in Manchuria," instead of waiting for an uncertain success, instead of trusting to the good chance of having a peaceful evolution?

More than once during the past year England has sounded out Japan as to the latter's willingness to join her in regulating the anarchy in the great Chinese empire. England has not yet ceased putting out such "feelers." What other price could England pay for such a favour than granting Japan's wishes as to Manchuria? To-day, when the technique of diplomacy offers such a rich assortment of devices as to leave one bewildered, her wishes could easily be satisfied, and without disrespect to the "open door" policy of the United States. And to these considerations the militarists in Japan add: "Manchuria must be ours. And when could we harm ourselves less by the step that will prove unavoidable than at the present time when everything in China is unsettled and Russia is absorbed in her domestic reconstruction?"

In the light of all this it is not difficult to understand why Japan is hesitating to meet Russia half-way in proposals by the latter looking to a relaxation of the tension in Manchuria—to an agreement. Japan does not refuse outright, but there

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

is a current in Japanese opinion that is setting too strongly against the idea of a "Far Eastern Locarno."

However, we must also bear in mind that a whole clock-work of forces embracing the entire globe would be set in motion if Japan were to lose patience and see her better advantage in an effort to have the clarification she desires by force of arms. Her whole present policy would be inverted. Japan would have to support England in the latter's effort to reconquer ground which she seems to have lost in China forever, unless she can find such support. Japan would have to turn against Russia whom she is at present playing against England. There would be reactions in European policy; for if a spark should fall on the powder magazine in Manchuria, an explosion would in all probability take place in the powder magazine that lies along Russia's Western boundaries.

Why has a Japanese military commission just been sent to Roumania? In the Far East people are learning to take the theory of an isolation of Soviet Russia, which Moscow is advertising in a shrill voice, quite seriously. Now it is not to the interests of Germany that any changes on her east flank should be made at the expense of Russia. That would simply set Germany one or two steps lower down the ladder than the Treaty of Versailles left her. But such a thing is possible if the situation in Manchuria should ever come to a decision by arms. It is evident that Article XVI of the Pact of the League of Nations is by no means just an abstract amusement for men of legal minds. It is evident that the moves of diplomacy in the Far East, that huge skein of problems that is after all spun of one thread, is not necessarily uninteresting to Germany.

NATIONAL OR SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN CHINA (Moscow, May, 1927.)

Karel Radck is no longer president of the Sun Yat Sen University, which he had nursed since its founding. His removal is an interesting and most complicated matter, as evidenced by the fact that it was not made public for some time. Seldom has it proved so difficult to distinguish in the
Moscow, May, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

tangle the Red thread out of which the ruling Party has been weaving its purposes and procedures. Radek was put out! That he was put out is certain. He was put out after disagreements as to the tactic to be followed toward the Chinese revolution. The debate began in the Communist Academy, and was continued in the Moscow "Active," so-called, of Party workers. It was what the English call a "frock coat" debate, though the frock coat is not in fashion here. The outsider can grasp only the roughest outlines of the question, or questions, with which it dealt. Bukharin's speech has been published; but these Marxian arguments are all so esoteric, so theological, so steeped in philosophical jargon, so difficult, in a word, even when they relate to practical questions of the moment, that great patience and great philosophical insight is required even remotely to suspect just what is at issue.

In one place, however, Bukharin becomes intelligible to the ordinary person. Radek, it seems, wants to repeat the Russian revolution of 1917 in China. He wants to get the masses out into the streets, call the peasants in from the fields, and solve in one fell swoop all the problems of Chinese liberation and reconstruction. Now the times are not yet ripe for that, say his opponents. The bourgeois elements in China must be brought into line, that they may co-operate with the Communists on the same front. Therefore a nationalist, and not just yet a social, revolution!

These things are known to some extent in Europe. They cannot possibly be regarded as irrelevant to the international situation. They show that Bolshevism in Soviet Russia does not mean exactly what it means in China. In China Bolshevism has stood for independence and freedom, but not for the extreme methods looking toward a dictatorship of the Fourth Estate, which have prevailed in Russia. In China Bolshevism has been willing to go a long way, but not to the limits. It has had no desire to provoke a war with the foreign Powers. It has not wanted an Anglo-Russian conflict either in Asia or in Europe.

But how have things actually developed? On the defection of Chiang-Kai-Shek, the Opposition might have been justified in gloating with an "I told you so!" For it was then apparent

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

that the Left Cuomintang and the Chinese Bolsheviks had not, in fact, been able to keep power in their hands. Had the peasants been granted exemption from rents and from interest on their debts, or had they even been promised that exemption, they might have been developed into a loyal army for the Canton-Hankow affair. They would have known for the first time for what and for whom they were fighting. As things turned out, Hankow and its Russian allies sat down between two chairs! A defeat for the official policy of the Kremlin!

A remarkable thing then took place, a thing in itself contradictory. No end of signs, not to say proofs, began appearing that the government had gone over to the standpoint of the Opposition. Bukharin provided his speech with an appendix, much clearer than his endless argument itself, in which he came out for the mobilization and organization of the masses in China, though in such a way "that the enemies of that country could not assert that they were being Bolshevized." Bukharin has not stated just how he pictures a revolutionary organization of non-Bolshevist character, nor can one gain any hint on the point from the study of other publications. They all seem to be thinking of the revolution advocated by the Opposition. All articles that have been published here point out that the Chinese Revolution is now reaching its decisive stage, and that the peasants in China will have to be mustered into organizations which would represent the *de facto* power.

Reports of growing unrest among the Chinese peasantry are piling up in Moscow, and great hopes are being set on the bands of Red Lances and other freebooters in Honan—that centre of the Cantonese province of Hupeh-Jünans, and also of agrarian misery in China. I must again allude to the publication in *Pravda* of an interview with Sung-Ho, the son of Sun Yat Sen, who does not match his father in reputation. He says that the whole world combined would not be able to resist a revolution of the Chinese peasantry. He says that the contemplated land reform, which would really amount to expropriation, would encounter no serious opposition from the proprietors. He says that during his last years Sun

Moscow, May, 1927

SOVIET RUSSIA

Yat Sen had grown convinced that the Chinese Revolution would not take the roundabout road of bourgeois nationalism, but would develop directly into the Social Revolution. Now that is the thesis of Radek and the Opposition.

One might think all this mere newspaper gossip ; but, on March 3rd, a resolution of the Central Committee of the Party, the "C.C."—the highest Party authority, therefore—declared that the critical situation in China required that henceforth the government should base its policy on the Chinese masses and go over to radical reform. At that time, therefore, a change to the thesis of the Opposition was being held in view. At that time the damage that would result from the defection of Chang-Kai-Chek was being discounted ; and Moscow was noting that the commitments made to that General, and to representatives of the Right Cuomintang—promises not to raise the question of land reform ; not to mobilize the peasants under ultra-revolutionary slogans ; not to hand the factories over to the workers—would lapse as a matter of course. The policy of compromise that had hitherto been followed—certainly at the instance of Borodin, and certainly, also, from the summer of 1926 on, with the approval of Karakhan and Stalin—seemed to have failed. But it is most surprising that from that failure the Central Committee found it advisable to draw the conclusions of the radical Opposition in favour of an aggressive policy.

RUSSIA, CHINA AND THE EASTERN CHINESE RAILROAD (Moscow, July 24th, 1929.)

On July 13th and the days following, the masses in Moscow, those masses which are the best organized in all Russia for such purposes, made a vehement demonstration against the encroachment just perpetrated by the Chinese at Harbin. What would have happened in Moscow if the cry "On to Harbin !" had been sounded ? Nevertheless, up there "at the top," no one had the slightest intention of going to war. Troops movements ? Pograditchnaya has long been an army concentration point for that section of the frontier on China ! But concentrations there just now ? Well, who ever can tell what the accursed breed of *émigrés* is going to start next in an

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

atmosphere so tense! That, after July 11th, a whole series of countermeasures to the Chinese illegalities were taken in Moscow is probable enough. There was, for instance, talk of banishing all Chinese "not suited to manual labour" from Soviet territory. The allusion was to those Chinese traders who have for years been doing business in Siberia—business not always desired by the Russians and not always permitted by law. The confiscation of their properties was discussed—and then, a thing still more serious, it was suggested that hostages be taken in Chinese Turkestan, or else in Mongolia. One thing definite only is known: that in the end the mildest measure was adopted: an embargo on trade with China.

We seem to have gone so far by now in the up-building of guarantees for international peace, that in the full height of a diplomatic crisis, it may safely be said of at least one of the countries involved that it has good reasons for not wanting war. "Bluff" no longer has the importance to-day that it formerly had. This is the age of the Kellogg Pact, of the League of Nations, and other devices for peaceful adjustments. But there are other guarantees still whereby a nation unjustly treated can get its due without recourse to its supplies of men and munitions. One of these new styled guarantees is that the offended nation itself is openly unwilling to rush to arms! That much, at least, we seem to have achieved!

But quite aside from such restraints, there are a number of material causes which make it extremely unlikely that the Soviet Union should be about to take up arms or that it has any intention of doing so. In the foreign policy of the Soviets the Eastern Chinese Railway has been occupying very much the status that Kiao-Chow played in German policy before the War: everybody knew that the position was untenable. Had the Soviet government, in making the treaties of Mukden and Peking in 1924, exercised the same self-restraint which, in the days of Lenin, and with greater wisdom, it had manifested in Persia and Turkey in connection with other privileges coming down from the Tsars, the blow which has now fallen on its advanced position at Harbin would have been spared it. But now that the blow has fallen, it would be utterly senseless to make great and perhaps incalculable sacrifices to reconquer

SOVIET RUSSIA

a position, only to lose it in the end again, even if in a somewhat more dignified manner. The fact is, a new page in history has been turned.

We have, of course, no way of knowing what further provocations, intrigues, or invasions of rights, the Soviets may have to expect from the heirs of Chang-tso-lin and the people from many parts of the world who stand behind them. But even in the event of such aggression—a chance which must be regarded as remote—one would judge that the carrying out of the “Five Year Plan” must weigh much more heavily in the balance at the Kremlin than any chance of future friction over lost property. Not only would the struggle for the economic independence of Russia, which after all is the fundamental content of the great Plan, be at stake, if things came to mobilizations and other resorts involving heavy and unusual expenses: the gigantic reorganization of society involved in the communization and collectivization of Russian agriculture would also be endangered. The Soviet government must regard these undertakings as much more important than the Eastern Chinese Railroad. Under these circumstances there are few seriously minded people in Moscow who believe there is any danger of war, at least of a war coming from the Soviet side. The Chinese violation of Russian territory was a flash of cold lightning. It started no conflagrations.

RUSSIA AND JAPAN

(Moscow, July 24th, 1929.)

Manchuria, nevertheless, remains a storm centre. One of the many considerations restraining the Soviet Union from any sort of armed intervention must be the difficulty of hitting the Chinese without giving offence to Japan. It is no secret that Japanese diplomacy has been viewing the increasing tension in regard to the Eastern Chinese Railroad during these last months with keen apprehension, and has been on the lookout for some act by the Chinese that would lead unavoidably to war. Japan can now only be satisfied at the unfavourable impression created throughout the world by the procedure of the Chinese. But can she help understanding

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE ON ASIA

that what has just happened to the Russians with their Eastern Chinese Railroad may sooner or later happen to the Japanese with their railroad in South Manchuria? Since Nanking's victory over Chang-tso-lin Japan has set up a sort of Monroe Doctrine for Manchuria, serving due notice on all parties concerned that she would not allow Manchuria to become a battleground for conflicting interests. This declaration doubtless holds good for any Red Army that might press down from the North; but it does not protect Japan from friction with the people now ruling in Mukden, who, meantime, are thriving undisturbed under the protecting wing of the "Monroe Doctrine" mentioned.

In all this we have a strong motive for a rapprochement between Japan and Soviet Russia. It is equally important for both countries to look to their respective business interests in Manchuria; and almost any day, Manchurian patriotism, strengthened by the immigration of millions of Chinese, may begin running counter to them. It is not probable that Japan is still pursuing territorial or political objectives that may have occurred to her in days gone by. But she will be only the more solicitous about her commercial position on that account. This is a question of life and death for the overpopulated island Empire; and no one can reasonably begrudge it this particular outlet. The interests of the Soviet Union in Manchuria, on the other hand, have so far been economic exclusively—the region has just begun to open up as a market for Soviet industries, especially for cotton goods. Of course, the interests of Soviet business require that the transit rights of the Siberian railroad, and the technical efficiency of the Chinese branch of that railway, be absolutely guaranteed. But all such questions can easily lose their political colouring as time goes on. There is a fundamental similarity in the situation of Russia and of Japan in Manchuria; and we may see a parallel development in the one case as in the other from a political to a strictly economic outlook. This parallelism would be exact already, were Japan not being continually forced over to the Chinese side by her fears of the Red propaganda within her own territory.

Before long the Western world will be brought to under-

Moscow, July 24th, 1929

SOVIET RUSSIA

stand that Manchuria is a triangular, and only in that sense an international, problem—as a cause of friction, namely, between the Soviet Union, Japan, and the Mukden-Nanking régime. Rather antiquated notions of “internationalizing” the railroad seem to sprout up every so often in the United States and in France—the latter now hoping that the rights which the Russian Asiatic Bank once held in the railroad may possibly be raised from the dead. However, in the interests of peace in the Far East, as well as of World Peace, it is essential that the Eastern Chinese Railroad be provided with regulations as simple as possible, without any new complications which could serve at best only to bring on a new crash! The broken leg must now be so set that it cannot be broken again—that is to say, it must be set in its natural position. Certain guarantees will of course be necessary, but not such as will provoke Chinese Nationalism to fresh outbreaks. That Japan is interested in localizing the quarrel over the railroad has been made clear to the parties most directly concerned—the Soviet Union and China—during these past few days, by offers of mediation which Japan has been pressing most perseveringly. Japan cannot in the least desire that Harbin should suddenly be filled with an international garrison. However, any adjustment that might be hoped for in this direction could not bring final peace and order to Manchuria. In place of the friction between Soviet Russia and China would arise the question of an understanding between China and Japan—a much more serious problem. There is little likelihood that the world can sidestep this problem, and even less likelihood that the problem can be localized in character. These, however, are troubles for to-morrow. The important point at the moment is that the Eastern Chinese Railroad route be eliminated from the number of international “danger zones.”

PART V
THE FUTURE

THE FUTURE

(Berlin, 1930.)

After entertaining the world for two years on the theme of the Socialization of 137 millions of Russian peasants and the astounding progress of their collectivization, Stalin now suddenly arises, just before the spring sowing, to declare that the tempo of the development in question has been dangerously rapid and altogether overstrained. But the trouble is that, more than anyone else, Stalin is responsible for the tempo in question; and a very unusual thing took place after his pronouncement. Mme. Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, and a woman suspected of Right Opposition heresies, was allowed to raise her voice in *Pravda* to describe in clearer and more vigorous terms the conditions which had brought the country to the edge of a precipice. She was allowed to say that it is again revolution in Russia, as it was in 1917, only more so. She was allowed to repeat what up to that moment had been only rumours of armed invasions by Communist guards and working-men in villages inclined to resist collectivization; and rumours of grave disorders and most terrifying violence.

All this, be it noted, from a leading woman of the Revolution, and with the permission of the government itself!

Now the remarks of Mme. Krupskaya were an indictment of Stalin's policy; the consequences of which Stalin was trying to evade in an article of his own called "Dizziness in Success." His article, however, had laboriously avoided describing the mischief in its true proportions. Mme. Krupskaya pins him down. This attack in the open Press confirms reports that have been stealthily emerging from behind the thick walls of the Kremlin for some time past: that the Right Opposition is not dead, despite the obeisance of its leaders before the Party's "general line," in other words, before Stalin's will!

Berlin, 1930

SOVIET RUSSIA

Stalin's position is again threatened, as it was a year ago at about this same season—at that time because, in the opinion of the moderates, catastrophe was approaching; now, because catastrophe is at hand, if it has not already arrived, in the great disorder now prevalent in the country. How, in fact, are the “paper” *colchoses* to be disentangled? Large areas of peasant property have already been jumbled together in them. The torch-light processions in the villages which celebrated Stalin's reversal of policy are not likely to continue very long!

However, this Shakespearean night scene should not prevent us from holding the general significance of these occurrences in view; for the compulsory Socialization of agriculture, against which Stalin has now so shrewdly turned in criticism merely of its excesses, is an unavoidable stage in the course which Soviet policy has followed since Lenin's death. It is just the dramatic climax of a crisis which has been prolonged through all these years, and throughout the length of which the same issue has always been involved.

In his NEP Lenin was seeking to effect a division of labour between the Socialized sector of Soviet economy and the “free” sector. The free sector was to perform functions which Socialist organization was not yet able to perform. The problem arose in connection with trade and agriculture, primarily—industry was the special domain of Socialism. A liberal, Manchesterian assumption underlay this idea of Lenin's, the assumption, namely, that a natural equilibrium between the “two different systems” would gradually “work itself out” after “some swings of the pendulum.” But underlying it also was another, a Socialistic assumption, that in all this process the Socialist sector would be the stronger one, the one that would “absorb” the other. Lenin, in fact, believed that the Socialist arc would round out the economic circle at a time when the peasant, persuaded by the success of Socialized business, would come over voluntarily to Socialism, himself.

Actual development took place in a direction precisely opposite. Private business, set free in 1921, was soon over-reaching and stifling the Socialist sector. By 1924, the govern-

THE FUTURE

ment felt itself obliged to apply "regulatory" measures against free trading in favour of the Socialized sector. At the same time, but with a hand less severe, it laid a heavier burden on agriculture; and this too was in favour of the Socialized sector. But still the equilibrium desired refused to materialize. Activity in free trading crumpled far beyond the degree foreseen; while in agriculture a process of underproduction set in, which first manifested itself in unmistakable terms in 1927, when the export of grain in the normal amounts proved to be impossible. The NEP, as was already apparent at that time, was resulting in growing deficits in all the domains upon which "regulation" bore, and down to this day it has uninterruptedly increased the instability of the whole economic and political structure of Soviet Russia.

Stalin grasped these facts with utter clearness and utter coldness from a very early moment. He was equally positive in understanding the alternatives by which the destinies of the Soviet State were confronted. If he allowed "free economy" to be really free, the Soviet system would lose its meaning and its *raison d'être*, both of which resided in its Socialist programme. But if Socialism were to be kept in its predominant position and carried forward, there was only one thing to do: resolutely to fill in the gaps produced by the shrinkage of the free sector, even at the cost of seeing private trading reduced to microscopic proportions and the situation made immediately worse. In that case, one would have to accept as part of the bargain: a complete cessation of accumulation in capital; an increased shortage of raw materials; increased unemployment among the masses; finally very serious mischief in the field of domestic supply, because of the inadequacy of State organization. The greatest drawback in all this would be the reaction on rural Russia. Here, in fact, hesitation was longest in applying Socialist "regulation" on a grand scale. But agricultural production, which stood in close correlation with free trading, rapidly fell off. Here too, then, Socialism has to supply the lacks at whatever cost. But in the flat lands also, free production fell off to a vastly greater degree than anyone had expected. A danger of catastrophic magnitude arose; for the whole Communist enterprise rested,

SOVIET RUSSIA

in the last analysis, on rural production. Misery and hunger made their way into the cities, the very strongholds of the Socialized sector.

The forced Socialization of these past years has not been, therefore, the sport of a few fanatics. It has been an absolute constraint to hurry forward along the only road on which the Soviet power can maintain itself. The agrarian burlesque that is now being enacted before our eyes is possibly only an episode. It will be just an episode if the Régime succeeds in mastering the disorder that has arisen, then in resuming the forward march more cautiously, finally in keeping on its feet during the days of famine which are already sounding their approach. There can be no retreat. That there can be no retreat Stalin shouted across the table at Rykov at a memorable session of the "Plenum" as early as 1928. His brutal policy of beating down all opposition everywhere shows that at that early date he had already foreseen the economic crisis that would result from the collapse of the NEP, and that he had discounted it. And now he probably understands that the low point in the descending curve has by no means been reached. The present disorganization will not show its full effects till the coming harvest. It is still five months till that time, months in which hunger can only increase.

What hopes can Stalin have, in view of the unavoidable increase in misery which his policy has so evidently occasioned? He, and the men whom he recognizes as his advisers and comrades in faith, are counting on a situation in which the Socialization of agriculture shall have progressed far enough to admit of rational production. That proved to be impossible within the orbit of the NEP, for many interesting reasons, as we have seen. From Stalin's point of view, the crises of these years have been "crises of liberation," of liberation from the handicaps, the annoyances, the mistakes, produced by the existence of free economic forces in the country.

One hears frequent mention of the "experiment of Bolshivism." It may well be that the Soviet system has the greater part of its future behind it. But not so its "experiment." According to all the experience of these past years, which

THE FUTURE

have been so rich in experience, the problem has always been rather to create the conditions essential to a "Bolshevist experiment" on Russian soil than actually to work with Socialism. The capacity of Socialism to survive in Russia can be tested only when it has attained a certain, and apparently a very high, degree of saturation in its effects on the national economy at large. The sooner Socialism is attained, the less harassing will these crises of transition be. The fact remains true in spite of all that has just been said, in spite of the setbacks occasioned by a brainless and needlessly cruel over-speeding in agrarian Socialization.

In this lies the reason why, contrary to all appearances, the situation of the Régime cannot be considered hopeless. The prognosis is not yet desperate. It would become desperate only in case the government were forced to beat a retreat over a wide front. Stalin's warning mentions only exaggerations. It does not indicate any intention of a real retreat. Such a retreat would be disastrous. To retrace a road that has now been left behind would for many reasons, material, psychological, political, be a most hazardous undertaking. After all, during these years, a great deal of genuine Socialism has been instituted. A Socialistic government, and the framework of a Socialist economy, have been set up. They do not function ideally, but they function. In the period since 1917, Socialism in Russia has not shown its capacities for survival in the absolute; but it has demonstrated that it can survive under certain conditions. The progress actually made in preparing those necessary conditions is a good basis for now attaining the "saturation" above referred to. The "experiment proper," so far as human foresight is able to predict, can now be tried increasingly on the foundations existing, provided the country's wind does not give out.

How long the country's wind can last is the great question at this moment. Incidents often determine the outcome of high tensions in economy and in politics such as the Soviet Union has been living under for years and at degrees which normal nerves would find unendurable. The danger lies in this very tension: a tiny straw may at any moment break

SOVIET RUSSIA

the camel's back. We must remember that the Socialist enterprise in Russia is so utterly theoretical in inspiration, so artificially imposed upon Russia, so vigorously directed against the natural forces present in the country—against the peasants in particular, that only the most ruthless severity, only the most unflinching logic, can permit holding the course toward the unheard-of and utterly unprecedented goal which hovers before the eyes of the Bolshevik rulers. The effort, so far, has been successful. That cannot be denied. But it has succeeded only through the suppression of every initiative not directed toward the goal, by impoverishing the country in its natural impulses of will, in its spontaneous production, and to a degree that only people who have lived a long time in the country can conceive. There has developed a tremendous mistrust of everything that does not work directly and effectively toward transforming the country to a Socialistic order. Spontaneous enthusiasm has diminished—it, too, far the ruling Party itself. The strangling noose has been drawn tighter about the neck of individual will all through the country. We are now fast coming to a point where only one man dares have a will in Russia: and that man is Stalin.

Stalin without doubt knows perfectly well how much initiative he is crushing or thwarting, how much criticism he is keeping unexpressed. The dominant position which he occupies has been thrust upon him. He rushed into it because no one understood as he understood, with his Asiatic keenness of perception and his Asiatic resolve in the use of power, what formidable measures had to be resorted to if Bolshevik power was to be maintained and its experiment carried to victory. He is surrounded by hatreds. Probably no one is as aware as he of the precise significance of this "effort" on the part of a Régime which finds its justification for existence only in three volumes of Karl Marx, and in twenty-two volumes by Lenin, which have already in large part been refuted by experience. There can be no doubt that he has only a minority of his Party with him, all the way up to the topmost ranks. What keeps him in power is an instinctive, and in some cases a well-reasoned, belief that is present in

THE FUTURE

almost everybody that he is the only man who can keep Soviet power at that pre-eminence to which he has brought it. His present confession of a mistake in his policy toward the peasants is a very dangerous one for him to make. It may weaken his prestige and give heart to those elements which by a sudden *coup* tried last year to replace him with the artful Kamenev.

What would happen if Stalin were to fall? Few people realize, and fewer still realize adequately, to what extent the Soviet Union in its present form has been cut to fit Stalin's stature. The Union has so developed in the course of recent years that it is now manageable at all only on the assumption that Stalin remain as the axis around which everything revolves. He has, to be sure, his understudies. But such products of his school have the defect that they are too much like Stalin to get along without him. If Stalin were to disappear, his very methods of negation, of shouting down contrary opinion, which he has been able to use so successfully, would work at cross purposes among his successors. In this lies the gravest danger for the survival of the Soviet Régime.

There is a great probability that the thin thread of will that is ruling Russia all by itself to-day will be snapped asunder once Stalin has gone. It is highly probable that this overstimulated "handiwork of man" may lose its sense together with the man who forced his will upon it. We must remember that the Russian structure is held up to-day by a sort of hypnosis, which derives from Stalin's person and is sustained by certain words, certain judgments, certain hopes and fears. The realization that, down to the liberating moment when the experiment will find a free path before it, every danger can be met only by conjuring up still greater dangers, is making superhuman demands on the nerves of the Party, on the men who lead it, and even, of late, on Stalin himself. It is a strange thing that the immediate danger to the Régime should lie in the man who controls it, and in the chance that that driving force, that curious mixture of brutality, artful cunning, and utter resolve which bears the name of Stalin, may at some moment vanish from the scene. That danger

SOVIET RUSSIA

exists, in truth, at every moment. Will Stalin's strength endure and be sufficient till all friction with the old world and the new has been driven beyond Russia's frontiers? Only if these conditions are fulfilled will the prospects not be desperate. As to what will become of the bourgeois world should Bolshevik Socialism ever get to be itself on Russian soil—well, that is another question!

PART VI

RETROSPECT

CHAPTER I

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA : BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU AND MALTZAN

RAPPROCHEMENT

Berlin, 1930.

After the assassination of Count Mirbach by Social revolutionists, relations between Imperial Germany and Moscow came to an end. The German Republic began to take a re-establishment of contact with the Soviet Union under serious advisement at a time when the "New Economic Policy" was being proclaimed by Lenin. In May, 1921, it concluded a provisory trade agreement with the Soviet government—the English, be it observed, had already signed a similar agreement with Litvinov. Thereupon a semi-official representative of the Republic was sent to Moscow. The following winter—the winter before Genoa—was spent in working out the basis for a "Russo-German Treaty of Friendship." In February, 1922, Radek betook himself to Berlin, with comprehensive instructions from the Soviet government. So that most interesting personality, the man whom Rathenau, Hintze, Deutsch, and other prominent people had visited in prison during the anxious months after November, 1918, in order to seek enlightenment on Bolshevism and other aspects of a much bewildered world, appeared again in Berlin, wittier than ever, as a diplomat.

In establishing relations with Russia, Germany hoped to find an economic and diplomatic fulcrum of power outside the net which Versailles had drawn about her. Her interests, as everyone could see, ran parallel with those of Soviet Russia; for that country, where revolution had become official, felt dangerously isolated among the great victor Powers, most of whom had waged open war on the Red structure all the way down to the year 1921. Lenin died convinced that the antagonism between the Soviet Union

Berlin, 1930

SOVIET RUSSIA

and the "imperialistic" Powers of the West, was a "fact of nature" and could eventuate in nothing but war. He hoped, nevertheless, that meantime he would be able to establish connections with them, and so, by a sort of armistice, create under the sign of the NEP, a temporary "breathing spell" absolutely essential to the consolidation of Soviet power. Lenin left these ideas as a legacy for his successors, but they, for their part, have shifted the Soviet centre of gravity since!

THE POLICY OF BARON MALTZAN

The course of German relations with Russia after the year 1920 was determined by one man, who worked for his theory with all his might: Baron Maltzan. He was the one man to perceive the great perspective, at first. He was the one man who grasped in its entirety the complicated and confused diplomatic problem that confronted Germany before Genoa. He had very few collaborators who understood him, and in those critical days his position in the Foreign Office, so far as form was concerned, was still relatively inconspicuous.

Nevertheless, his ideas were soon controlling the situation, though not without vigorous opposition. If Russia were to show an economic development even half-way normal (as she bade fair to do through the New Economic Policy) she would offer opportunities for a profitable expansion of German business. Russia, in fact, would be Germany's "only hope" if the West were, as seemed probable, to remain closed to her, or would be opened up only at the cost of unbearable sacrifices. German and Russian reconstruction could supplement each other. The two peoples could be brought to a mutual understanding. On the East Front there were no victors and no vanquished! So it would be possible, just possible, to lay the foundations for a diplomatic co-operation capable of exerting some influence on the rest of the world. The opportunity for doing so, and the way in which it should be done, would have to be discovered gradually.

All this was on the assumption that pressure of circumstances would force the economic dogmas of the Bolsheviks into

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

channels where a free and unhampered interchange of values between the two peoples would be possible—and of this the proclamation of the NEP seemed to give hopes. From the very first Baron Maltzan nourished no illusions as to the limits which the theories and the personal qualities of the Soviet leaders set to such hopes, even to the point of making their fulfilment extremely doubtful. But if hoping were at all permissible under the conditions then prevailing, there could be hope only in the direction of Russia. The possibilities inherent in such a policy seemed quite by themselves adequate to balance the weight of distress and dread under which Germany was staggering.

One leading idea—the discovery of a counter-balance to Versailles—lay at the bottom of this policy. Under the circumstances it was a very abstract notion—in the beginning at least. But at one point it could be put into operation immediately. Poland had been thrust in as a very palpable wedge between Germany and Russia. She was deporting herself in an aggressively hostile manner toward both countries, and one could never know what the cliques in Warsaw would be up to next. From the German and the Russian point of view, Lithuania was the crux of the Polish problem, especially after Vilna had been occupied by Poland in disregard to international law. If the thing were carried any further, if Lithuania disappeared altogether, East Prussia would be lost to Germany. And, in the same case, Russia could see a danger that the Polish barrier, which was cutting her off in many important senses from the West, would some day be extended as far North as the Baltic coast.

Out of all these meditations there gradually evolved the instrument which at Rapallo, on the spur of the moment, became the Treaty between Germany and Soviet Russia. Opposition in Germany, even in the German delegation at Genoa, was great, and down to the last moment. Ebert, violently anti-Bolshevist as befitted a reformist Socialist, thought he had been taken unawares, and never forgave Maltzan for the Treaty of Rapallo. Soviet Russia, on the contrary, was eager for the Treaty from the start, and without any wavering. Her delegates, on setting out for Genoa, had

SOVIET RUSSIA

been instructed by Lenin to "bundle in" with everybody, but to "tie up with nobody—except Germany." (The same instructions were given again and again on later occasions.) The fact indicates Moscow's limitless mistrust of the Western Powers.

Germany was not a capitalistic country in the way the others were. She could serve as the butt-end of a Soviet battering-ram against the West. But the important thing in the eyes of people in Moscow was that Germany, as an ally of Soviet Russia, would be growing ripe for the World Revolution more rapidly than the Kremlin could expect her to do in any other rôle. In all the negotiations antecedent to Rapallo, Moscow had demanded obligations on Germany's part which would have involved her in every adventure which the Soviets saw fit to undertake, and have widened the gulf between her and the West. That was not what Germany wanted. She refused. Moscow had to be satisfied with what it could get.

Maltzan was not a reckless adventurer. He had, as we have said, no illusions as to his partner. He was altogether lacking in sentimentalism. But however coldly he may have judged, despised, and used people and things, he was all enthusiasm when playing for a great stake. His cynicism often frightened his closest friends. In his social environment he had the bitterest personal enemies—they called him "the Red Baron." They, at least, could see that Maltzan kept himself free of all preconceptions down to the limits of the moral and the possible, in order to fight unhampered for the things he wished to achieve in his country's behalf. He was a person who repelled and at the same time attracted. Maltzan once said: "I was born without prestige." He had, in compensation, the greatest dignity. It came natural to him, even in politics. He never yielded one jot on that point, either as regarded himself or his country. And that determined his conduct toward the Soviet Union to the very end.

THE TWO-RAILED POLICY OF RUSSIA

Maltzan correctly foresaw that Soviet Russia would be "re-admitted to good society" at Genoa. Lloyd George gave the signal for that. Even the Pope helped. The danger that

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

Russia might strike an agreement with the Western powers at the expense of Germany Maltzan overestimated at the time, and even afterwards. But he was right in attaching the greatest value to the stipulation in the Rapallo Treaty whereby Russia renounced the reparations' claims which had been wisely reserved for her at Versailles. For the rest it was clear to him that the abiding value of Russia as a friend would be determined not by the Russia she was at the time, but by the Russia she might become at some later day.

The first difficulty was that the "spirit of Rapallo" was destitute of the slightest body, and eager efforts had to be made at once to materialize it. Within a few days of the signing, an emissary of the Reich was on his way from Genoa to the Ruhr district to persuade the great concerns there to ask for concessions in Russia. All the economic ventures, one may add, which were launched at that time out of political considerations, ended in failures which are still bearing harmfully upon Russo-German relations.

When, toward the close of the year 1922, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau went to Moscow as the first ambassador of the German Republic, he had thoroughly imbued himself with the hopefulness inherent in the Maltzan policy. He even intensified that hopefulness by qualities of temperament overstimulated perhaps by his experiences at Versailles, where he had led the first peace delegation of Germany—the one which refused to sign the dictated peace. Rantzau gave to German policy toward Russia, especially at first, an extravagance of expression which made it almost too dependent on a requital in equally enthusiastic language. From the German point of view Genoa had been on the whole a failure. The matter of reparations seemed to be headed toward a catastrophe. All the more, therefore, in the face of the pressure that was crushing Germany, did Russia seem to be the only possible avenue of escape. The Soviet government, on the other hand, was at liberty, after Genoa, to make efforts to extend the circle of her Western contacts.

Both sides now began to "cash in" on the Rapallo Treaty, but in very different spirits, as regarded their mutual relations. Germany sought in Russia an ally who would broaden and

SOVIET RUSSIA

strengthen her front toward Versailles. So far, therefore, as any policy may be said to have a main, a single purpose, Germany's purpose in going to Rapallo was Versailles. Russia also condemned Versailles. She saw in that Treaty the germ cell of possible coalitions against Russia. But all the same she thought of Rapallo as a springboard toward the West and, in the end, as an explosive that might be the undoing of the Europe of Versailles through the outbreak of a Bolshevik revolution in Germany.

Germany, in her situation, continued to do everything possible to give a substance to her Russian relations—and that has been her lot down to this day. Russia was pleased, but she considered it important not to give countries that seemed significant from an economic point of view an impression that Germany had a monopoly of Russian business. She did not feel at all inclined to fall in with the German idea of sacrificing all other interests to the diplomatic and political rapprochement. Germany acquired a large number of concessions on Russian soil for enterprises that were unsound from a business point of view; and she accorded Russia a far-reaching hospitality in matters of business expansion in Germany. This too was to become a cause of very real concern as time wore on. In Germany there then came into existence that policy which studiously and artfully closed its eyes to the fact that the Soviet government was travelling on two parallel rails, the one of which carried official diplomatic relations, while the other carried tools for undermining the ground under Germany's feet in the interests of World Revolution. The utter artificiality of the so-called "friendly relations" was apparent from the beginning.

The Ruhr affair, not quite a year after Genoa, subjected that friendship to a severe test. The riots in Hamburg and Central Germany, which began in the fall of 1923, were sickly offspring of a movement which the French invasion provoked within the ranks of the Party ruling in Russia. A few days after the Ruhr had been occupied, the Party group in question published its demands that that exciting Franco-German episode, which had hitherto been left entirely in the hands of the Foreign Commissariat, should henceforth be

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

handled "from the revolutionary standpoint." The "standpoint," in literal fact, was that the worse Germany were treated by France, the better for Russia! The Ruhr affair was an act of economic warfare. If Germany were to break down, the moment for the World Revolution would be at hand! Moscow should work to produce that result—not to prevent it, as its Rapallo engagements required! In January, 1923, the author of this book had an interview with Stalin anent the "Federal Constitution" of Soviet Russia, which had just been proclaimed. He chanced to remark, as he was rising to take his leave, that Germany, too, was a federation of States; whereupon Stalin, in a sudden burst of that ungraciousness which distinguishes his personal contacts, sneered: "When we take charge in Germany, the first thing we shall do will be to wipe the slate clean of the ridiculous and quite superfluous states of which that country has been compounded."

For once, a glimpse, eye to eye, of the hidden face of Moscow's Janus-headed Foreign Policy, the face which usually is kept so studiously in the dark!

By the month of August, 1923, all the posts which Russian Communists were to occupy in Sovietized Germany had been allotted. It is instructive to remember now how quietly and smoothly Moscow's diplomatic treatment of the Ruhr affair ran along, quite regardless of the fact that the Party, with spectacular publicity, was furthering its policy of "the worse, the better" in Germany. The "Narkomindel" was afraid that the French onrush might clear Poland in one leap and collide with Russia. Kopp hurried off to Riga and Warsaw with most astounding propositions! The twin rails of Soviet policy had suddenly intersected in a most interesting manner.

MALTZAN AND BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU

It was in just those days that Maltzan made his very appropriate remark that Russo-German relations would, if they were to continue, have to be "kept in water-tight bulkheads." That was not an easy thing to do. The Prussian police, acting on its own responsibility in May, 1924, made a raid on the headquarters of the Soviet Trading Agency in Berlin, which had been under suspicion for a year or more. It is typical that

SOVIET RUSSIA

the Soviet Government responded to this episode with a boycott which lasted for months ; while Germany had handled much worse outrages, emphatically but carefully, through diplomatic communications delivered in confidence. However, the benediction of several Western Recognitions had just settled on the head of Moscow. The Soviet government was concerned to demonstrate its freedom of action and to give warning in time to others. In the words of Rantzau, it did not "shy at dirtying the Rapallo nest like a hoot owl." The Soviets generously left it to Germany to consider questions of delicacy in the matter of "friendly relations;" and to find ways and means to give the Rapallo Treaty some significance in world affairs. Just how far Germany could go with such one-sided efforts, what value they could have in view of their one-sidedness, was a question of continuous and grave concern to Wilhelmstrasse, at the time ; and the situation has not changed in any important particular, since.

Under these circumstances the burden of carrying the Treaty was shifted, one may say, automatically, and more and more, upon the shoulders of Germany. And she was compelled to accept the burden in virtue of the line of thinking that had guided her to Rapallo. The assumptions underlying that policy subsisted after Genoa, as they had subsisted before. No German government down to the present time has dared to deny those assumptions or the conclusions that follow from them. But Germany had to confess to herself that where she had sought solid bonds of friendship, she had at the most spun slender threads. Break those threads, or perhaps even one of them, and the whole structure would be compromised, and all the effort come to naught ! That consideration has always counselled the greatest caution. Russia always had something to gain and little to lose ! She seemed to be secure from all attack. Germany, on the other hand, was critically exposed on her flanks. That enabled Russia to exploit the situation.

After Genoa Maltzan became the responsible head of Germany's Eastern diplomacy. What he feared all along, after France had recognized Soviet Russia, was a far-reaching understanding between the two countries, especially with

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

regard to Poland. A great worry to him ! It was just one more reason for his feeling tied to Rapallo ! Yet the tangled morass of Bolshevist deceitfulness and brutality which the year 1923 revealed (the more irritating details were carefully kept from public knowledge, though they were the subject of ringing protests in secret diplomatic communications) destroyed his last lingering illusions as to the possibility of relations of genuine confidence with Moscow. The threads referred to could, to be sure, not possibly be broken ; but in spite of that Maltzan thought he could go a long way in the direction of coldness ! A minimum of obligation, but such as there was, to apply to the whole scope of the Rapallo Treaty ! This the attitude which he now thought most sound.

Maltzan, however, understood perfectly well that any connections established by Germany toward the East (as, for that matter, any independent move on the part of German diplomacy anywhere) would awaken apprehensions among the Western Powers. There is no doubt that he regarded a constructive Eastern policy as absolutely necessary ; but he saw that such a policy involved the great danger of cutting off possibilities of more positive relations with the West. On this point, indeed, Maltzan, the "man of the Eastern policy," saw farther ahead than many other people. He saw also that if precautions had to be taken, they had to be taken first of all against misunderstandings with England. He had reasons for assuming that England would have a sympathetic understanding, however vaguely expressed in formal terms, of an active Eastern policy on Germany's part. It was not an accident that in the year 1921 England and Germany made trade agreements with Soviet Russia at almost the same time—England made hers two months earlier than Germany. The English and the German diplomatic missions were dispatched almost contemporaneously ; and they represented in both cases the preliminary step to a full resumption of relations. The two countries kept each other informed as to the progress of their negotiations. Under these circumstances it would be a mistake to think of Germany's Eastern policy as a one-sided venture. She could not continue in the complete diplomatic isolation in which she had found herself since the *Berlin*, 1930

SOVIET RUSSIA

Armistice. And of course she could only act where there was room for her to act. That opportunity she found in the East, but also to a certain extent in England.

In this respect one might more definitely describe Maltzan's policy before the Genoa Conference as a sort of protective policy, for securing himself in the rear. In a sense it was very like Bismarck's *Rueckversicherungs* policy in regard to Tsarist Russia, which that statesman conducted in order to take the curse, in Russian eyes, off the treaty of alliance which he had made with Austria. The tacit agreement which Maltzan cultivated with England offset any suggestion of aggressiveness or intrigue that his Russian policy might otherwise have given. That was why England was apprised of the negotiations which were conducted in Berlin during February and March, 1922, for a Russo-German treaty of friendship. England knew the subject matter of those negotiations long before Rapallo!

From this arose, ultimately, the sensation that accompanied the signing of the Rapallo Treaty at the Conference of Genoa. Lloyd George, it will be remembered, waxed indignant over the Eastern treaty. But from the very beginning of the Conference he held secret meetings with the Soviet Delegation at Villa de Albertis, to which the Germans had not been invited. In spite of their many efforts to see him, the German delegates, Wirth and Rathenau, did not have their first conference with Lloyd George till three days after the Treaty had been signed. Then they pointed out that Lloyd George had been apprised beforehand of the contemplated Treaty. They had even discussed the matter there in Genoa with a member of the English delegation. But Lloyd George, in the face of remonstrances from the Germans, had dropped his intermediary, and of course, after that, the German delegation was helpless.

Nevertheless, Maltzan steadfastly clung to his purpose of never allowing Rapallo, in any event, absolutely to prevent understandings between Germany and the West. On this point he stood at complete opposites with Russian intentions. By virtue of it he set about preparing the ground, on his side, for Locarno. But he kept consistently to his very narrow path, the path of using Rapallo to bring his enemies from Versailles

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

to appreciate the value of an understanding with Germany. But at the same time he took good care that the consequences of Rapallo should not envelop Germany in a fog of distrust.

Now this was not a game for Brockdorff-Rantzau at all. He believed in "the common lot and destiny of these two hard-pressed peoples," and that that "common destiny" would exert an inspiring influence on the "hard-boiled dispositions" of the men who are shaping the future of the Soviet Union. Rantzau's confidence in this kind of motivation was much greater than Maltzan's. The difficulties he saw as clearly as Maltzan—but, instead of drawing back, he doubled his stakes! If he found himself in an extremely complicated situation crammed with contradictions, he rushed into them head down, with grim resolve. Whenever he went (as he always went, when he could) more than half-way to meet the Soviet people, with the idea of taming them, he still felt that he had the matter in hand, in his own hands! He thought he could reform people whom Maltzan had very soon given up as incorrigibles. In this outlook of Rantzau's an important part was doubtless played by the fact that he, personally, was cut off from the West, as the man who had refused to accept the dictated peace which had become the foundation for international relations in Europe. The whole world, on the other hand, lay open to Maltzan. No one, of course, knows what Rantzau may have been thinking in his innermost privacy. But it would seem as though he were shortly convinced that the execution of the task set by Rapallo depended entirely and exclusively on his own person. Divining in advance what lay before him, he had provided himself, before going to Moscow, with an amplitude of powers accorded to an ambassador by rarest exception. He thought of himself as his own Foreign Minister! He had the privilege of bringing every matter directly to the attention of the President of the German Republic.

Nevertheless, from the very beginning, and especially during 1924, his life in Moscow was one continuous battle on two fronts: against the Soviets, in an effort to entice them, to force them, into an attitude compatible with a sincere friendship between Russia and Germany; and against Berlin, where
Berlin, 1930

SOVIET RUSSIA

the high tension of Rantzau's policies was not at all enjoyed, and where Locarno was looming in the offing, with Germany still embarrassed as to how she could combine a new "Western policy" with the policy she had been following in the East.

No open quarrel developed between Rantzau and Maltzan—the latter had meantime become Secretary of State. Maltzan did not disturb Rantzau. He merely went his own way. But he was saying audibly of the Soviet government that "nothing could be done with such people." Rantzau reiterated elaborate proposals for "deepening" relations with Russia. Maltzan simply filed them as "finished business." With Stresemann, Maltzan could never get along; perhaps because their ideas were similar without being exactly coincident. Just before Locarno Maltzan went to Washington as Ambassador. From that time on he ostentatiously confined his personal relations with the Soviets to the most superficial formalities.

LOCARNO AND RAPALLO

It would be a mistake to assert that Rantzau was hostile to Locarno, in principle. He was too big a man, and too conscientious a man, not to see that after the defeat of German diplomacy in the Ruhr, a change from a side saddle to a straddle, some sort of balance, in other words, between East and West, had become necessary. But he thought Locarno premature. It was coming too cheap! And he missed in it, in particular, an adequate amount of consideration for Russia.

Stresemann won perhaps his greatest diplomatic triumph at that conference in Geneva where he convinced Chamberlain and Briand of the unavoidable necessity of close relations between Germany and Russia in the interests of Europe as a whole—convinced them thoroughly enough, at least, to get an interpretation of Germany's obligation to assist in executing decrees of the League of Nations, which would take account of Russian sensibilities. The chief point of dispute in this connection was whether Germany would agree to permit the transit of foreign troops and munitions through her territory. Action of the kind seemed to be provided for in the Covenant.

Looking at the matter from the standpoint of 1922, must the Russians not have found it bad enough that Germany

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

should even have discussed such a point at Locarno? Locarno remained at first a one-sided movement on Germany's part toward the West. In Moscow the excitement was intense. Rantzau saw that his policy was in a desperate plight and only an appeal from Hindenburg induced him to withdraw his resignation—one resignation, among many others during the six years he was ambassador in Moscow.

Politics is in many respects an art of imponderables. So far as anything certain may be said of imponderable things, Locarno was to a large extent the work of the men of Rapallo. Endless difficulties had been met in the maintenance of Russo-German relations, some of them generally known, but still more kept hidden from public notice. In view of them, the word "bluff" was frequently dropped among those very men themselves in speaking of that friendship, the maintenance of which constituted its only purpose because there was so little of friendship to be found in it! What had driven Germany to the East was the enormous potential power of an empire of 150 million human beings. That was something the Western Powers also had to take into account, especially in connection with the indisputable fact that Germany stood closer to the "monster shrouded in a mystery of Red" than anybody else. Hence the "bluff"! Rantzau found a way to bring this situation home to Western minds with the greatest possible effectiveness.

If it be granted that Rapallo had some share in promoting the things that Locarno stands for, then it cannot be overlooked that that circumstance also implies the existence of very serious obstacles to the final success of the work of Locarno. The Rapallo Treaty was always surrounded by a suspicion that it contained military clauses that were kept secret; and even to-day hints of some military connection between Germany and the Soviet Union may be heard. If they existed, they could only do so as a mental reservation on Germany's part in signing at Locarno, where the main thought was to eliminate the *revanche*. And it would be very serious if, among the considerations which brought the sometime Allies to Geneva, there had also been a desire to create a counterpoise to any possible combination of a military nature between
Berlin, 1930

SOVIET RUSSIA

Germany and Russia. For that would imply a mental reservation on the part of the Allies, against Germany, and deprive talk about the "spirit of Locarno" of much of the significance it would otherwise seem to have.

But is there any good reason for assuming such a mental reservation on Germany's part? The Red Army is being trained in every possible way for bringing the Bolshevik Revolution to victory in foreign countries. Any support that Germany might give it, therefore, would be a step toward suicide. Events of recent years have made that fact palpably apparent.

GERMAN TREATIES, 1925-6

In April, 1926, Germany concluded a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union. How much it actually signified may be seen from the fate of one of its paragraphs which provided for mutual appraisals, on the part of the two governments, of any important diplomatic steps that might be contemplated by the one or the other. This effort to give an increased substance to ostensibly friendly relations became, as had been the case with many similar efforts, only the source of dispute after dispute. The auspices under which the Treaty was made were not altogether favourable. The idea behind it was to offer the Soviet Union some compensation for Locarno; but it came, as we have seen, too late in time, and in content; even in the stipulations of intimacy above referred to, it did not go beyond what is plainly customary in international avowals of friendship in our day and age. To remedy this defect, of course, the Russians had their recipe. It went back to the days of the negotiations preceding Rapallo; and they had clung stubbornly to it over all those years. Poland! Poland again! But it failed of acceptance once more on this occasion at Berlin; so the Treaty of Friendship was born in an atmosphere of ill-feeling.

Looking back over the years since 1922, the friends of the Rapallo policy are forced to confess that the expected teamwork necessary for the continuous co-operation of Germany and the Soviet Union in the international field has not materialized. Germany has merely had opportunity after opportunity to emphasize her friendliness by support ever

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

unreciprocated lent to the Soviet government. Germany has always, time after time, taken advantage of those opportunities. Whereas for nine years Russia had invariably done everything possible to separate Germany from the West, it was natural, from Locarno on, that, within certain limits, Germany should welcome Russia's rapprochement to Europe. Germany could only suppose that such a development would tend to alleviate her exposed position as a friend of Russia. How dangerous, under the proper circumstances, friendship with Russia might become, was made most significantly clear at the time of England's rupture with the Soviet Union. Germany could only hope that the Union would abandon its voluntary isolation *vis-à-vis* of the bourgeois world, since that attitude created an atmosphere of increasing danger all around. Russia's feelers toward the West have, so to speak, "gone cold" since the year of the recognitions—1924. This was the work of the radical element in the Party, and stood in close correlation with the movement of Russian economic policy, and for that matter of Russian life as a whole, toward the Left. And all this increased the mortgage which lay upon Rapallo in the nature of the case.

Germany lent her support to Russia mostly at the cost of great inconvenience. Her entrance into the League of Nations was a great shock to the Russians. The latter, however, were admitted to technical conferences at Geneva, and there they found German aid no less welcome, though only up to the point where the propaganda of the Komintern began. The Germans were able to serve as foils, at the very most, for the overbearing extravagance of the Russian demands. So, the same incompatibilities which had affected the relations of the two friends from the very beginning, continued down to Geneva and beyond. Every session ended in bad temper. Moscow emphasized for propaganda purposes the cowardice shown by Germany on the question of disarmament and other matters; while Berlin either ignored or made light of such accusations. Only the question of maintaining Lithuania's independence against Poland led to concerted action. There Russia and Germany, still going separate ways, nevertheless managed in certain instances to pool their influence (though

SOVIET RUSSIA

not the language they used at Warsaw), a happy result that derived, however, not from any abstract postulate of friendship but from the pressure of concrete facts.

Nevertheless, in spite of everything, Lithuania was not big enough potatoes to stuff the bag of Rapallo full; and Germany has had no luck in filling the vacuum by way of trade. Working in the spirit of Rapallo, Germany concluded a commercial treaty with the Soviet Union in 1925, making, for the sake of better diplomatic relations, every possible concession to the Socialistic tendencies of Soviet business. The path to Russia was smoothed for German goods by a State credit of 300 million marks. The friendly reciprocation of the Soviet government consisted in a declaration that it was willing to take goods to that amount. Thereupon, on the German side, much was done, and many proposals were made, to establish business relations on a firm and permanent basis. The Soviet government, in reply, took a strictly business point of view and expressly stated that it preferred to treat questions of economic relations case by case. It regarded its economic independence as all important—a point of view altogether understandable, since the success of Russia's programme of Socialization depended on it. At the same time the Soviet government chose to retain full freedom of action toward other countries from whom it might expect assistance in its work of reconstruction, and whose policies it hoped to influence through trade channels. There was all the less reason for specially favouring Germany, since the latter seemed to have given all she could give at Rapallo, and was continuing to do so! From now on Germany began to feel the competition of those who still had something in their pockets for Russia, particularly in the political field—recognitions, let us say, or cancellations of Tsarist debts. After Locarno, also, Soviet diplomacy took the tack of continually reminding Germany that she had to furnish proofs of a loyalty now seriously compromised; and the Soviet Press was packed with suspicions and aspersions as to Germany's intentions. For that matter, had not the Germans said a hundred times that they "needed" Russia, that the Russian market was their safety valve? Nevertheless, the Russian share of Germany's export

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

trade never exceeded 3 or 4 per cent. of her total. For financial reasons the capacity of the Russian market to absorb goods was very limited. It was all the easier, therefore, for the Soviet government to pretend that the opportunities it was offering to German business were its full contribution to the Treaty of Rapallo.

Under these circumstances the very emptiness of Germany's relations with Russia gave them a certain content by continually requiring negotiations as to how the vacuum might be filled ! In the diplomatic field the Russians frankly demanded the impossible : that Germany renounce any positive policy toward the West, but undertake joint responsibility for the questions posed by her troublesome neighbour in the East. And in the economic field the people at the Kremlin had a most simple solution : German credits, on long terms and at low rates of interest. They, undoubtedly, would foster good relations !

LOGIC AND REALITY

Stresemann has referred to "two different systems" that had to work side by side in Russo-German friendship. Such neutrality in expression is characteristic of the spirit of Rapallo as reflected by Germany. When the two systems are mentioned in Bolshevik terms, they are called "antagonist," in the best case ; more often the term is "hostile." The author cannot flatter himself that the above sketch comes anywhere near describing the reasons why the work done at Rapallo never took very firm root—in fact, never has left the hot-house stage, to enjoy a natural, spontaneous growth.

Supposing we make a further effort, realizing all the while that to go to the very bottom of them is impossible because forces and impulses utterly without precedent, utterly new, are at work in this Russia of permanent revolution, a State resolutely revolutionary at home and abroad. The rulers of this new State, where hatred is a State morality if not a State religion, do not understand themselves altogether. How much more difficult therefore it must be for an outsider to grasp their motives and their inner natures ?

From the standpoint of both partners to the Rapallo Treaty, there was in 1922 and in the years following every reason

SOVIET RUSSIA

why the Treaty should thrive. In the year 1891, when General von Schweinitz was leaving his post as ambassador to St. Petersburg, which he had held for seventeen years, he noted in his diary: "17 years of work come to nothing!" It had been work for Russo-German friendship, and in rational terms success was not less probable in those days than it is to-day, and has been, in the eight years that have elapsed since Genoa. The fact that a thought in international politics is logical is not an indication that it can be realized. The logical soundness of a political idea should never hypnotize us to such an extent that we are unable coldly and dispassionately to estimate the forces working against its success; for those forces are just as much a part of reality as the desire to realize the great idea.

At the time of Rapallo the Soviet Union felt itself far superior to Germany. Russia was economically ruined, but she was free. One of the first acts of Rantzau on taking office was to protest a remark by Radek in *Izvestia* to the effect that Germany was "only a plaything of Western diplomacy." That, however, was what Moscow thought, and Moscow was right in thinking so. An interview I had with Tchitcherin in 1925 still reflected, at that late date, under far changed conditions to be sure, the same fundamental notion. He thought that the Soviet Union could juggle the weight of Russian power back and forth between England and France as the emergency required, without becoming dependent on either the one or the other through any binding agreement: and he thought of Germany as going back and forth with Russia, whenever the latter led the way. In the interview in question, he took it for granted that, so far as her own resources went, Germany would not be in a position for a long time to come to make herself either valuable or troublesome to either of the two great Powers in the West. She could be, perhaps, through the stronger medium of her Eastern neighbour—and at what price was clear enough! In view of such an outlook, where Germany figured as a pawn in the moves of Russian diplomacy, one may understand what Locarno must have meant to Russia. Locarno was unpardonable! And so was the League of Nations! The

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

Soviet government never was able to understand the necessity of Germany's taking a new road after the Ruhr catastrophe. And in Germany no one understood this inability to understand ; in fact no one in Germany had any idea that Locarno had deprived Rapallo of a considerable part of its value in the eyes of the Soviets. And this attitude, again, was unintelligible in Russia ! These obstacles in the way of mutual comprehension constituted a great handicap in progress toward an understanding ; but they were in themselves not necessarily unsurmountable obstacles.

THE RÔLE OF THE PARTY

A decisive point in all these misunderstandings is that Moscow is not the whole of the Soviet Régime. The real Moscow is the Party. When Lenin permitted his representatives in Genoa of all the bourgeois powers to embrace Germany alone, he did so because he saw in Germany the next country likely to raise the banner of World Revolution. The "Versailles gang" would drive Germany to revolution, inevitably—such was the prevailing opinion, in Moscow. The Rapallo Treaty, therefore, was a "temporary arrangement." And, in the Party, men of the stamp of Stalin began coming to the fore, men who foresaw an even shorter term to the "temporary arrangement" that Lenin had foreseen. Whence the great effort of 1923 to throw Germany into the grip of a Bolshevik revolution. For the failure of the effort the Party came to forgive bourgeois Germany ; but it never forgave the meddling Reformist Socialists in the German government. Up to that time Germany had looked like a hope for the progress of the Revolution. Afterwards Germany looked rather like a bulwark against the Revolution, a bulwark erected on a key position necessary for a triumph of the Soviets in Europe. During all the years following, the Party tried, wherever and whenever possible, to turn its attack on Germany. Moscow saw clearly enough that Rapallo could not be allowed to lapse. The government's instinct of self-preservation time and again resisted the outburst of revolutionary bad temper. The Lenin tradition was still at work. From time to time, as occasion offered, the language of Rapallo was again revived.

SOVIET RUSSIA

But the "Party's line" did not veer a particle: to interpret Russo-German relations to the country as a matter of pure expediency; to avoid the formation of any sentimental bonds; and, meantime, to direct all revolutionary sentiment, along with the proper amount of revolutionary fury, upon Germany, while restricting to a minimum any Russian reciprocity to courtesies from Germany.

A most surprising situation resulted. At the Foreign Commissariat, relations were being officially fostered, taking on a personal note as the intimacy between Tchitcherin and Rantzau grew in the course of their midnight conversations. There "big politics" were exhaustively discussed as though no "temporary arrangement" of Lenin had ever existed. And the Foreign Commissariat, meantime, did all it could—that much must be allowed—to make things easier for Germany, to hold aloof from the doings of the Party. How far that was possible, in the name of Rapallo, was the subject of numberless controversies which Rantzau conducted, now with Berlin, in one direction, now with Moscow, in the other. Looking coldly at the facts, the Rapallo friendship rested on a very few individuals. A few symbols for it were used in public, such as official conferences of scientific men, and certain stereotyped phrases that were repeated over and over again in public utterances. Rantzau did everything he could to extend and improve actual relations between the two peoples, stopping with German State resources gaps which German private business failed to fill. And, as we have seen, he did everything he could to make the weight of Germany's Eastern interests felt in arrangements that were being made in the West. That was a task to which he clung with his whole soul. But other worries took the far greater share of his time, and gradually undermined his health. Most of his energies were devoted to counteracting manœuvres of the Party and the G.P.U. which were aimed directly at Russo-German relations and turned the history of the Rapallo policy into an unbroken series of "incidents" between the two countries. For the Party was ever up to something to express its hatred and its mistrust of a Germany that was plain "bourgeois Germany" before Locarno, and became "neo-imperialistic Germany" afterwards.

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA INCIDENTS

The incidents referred to have been in part revealed, though we cannot enumerate them in detail here.

It would hardly be proper to describe as an "incident" the movement of 1923, whereby an army of Soviet agents was dispatched to Germany with passports forged by the G.P.U. An incident, rather, we might call an episode which was always and improperly kept out of the papers in deference to Rapallo, and which originated in the activity of the Moscow Komintern in that same year, 1923.

In the year 1924 three students, two of them Germans and the other an Esthonian (probably an *agent provocateur* of the G.P.U.), were arrested in Moscow, and at first with no hint as to the reasons. In fact, the reasons were probably not found, for a long time! But ten months later, in June, 1925, the three students were condemned to death. And it then developed that they were really hostages, to be offered in exchange for a prisoner in Germany! The man in question was a certain Skobelev, who, in 1923, had made two attempts—both failing by a hair's breadth—on the life of General von Seeckt, in whom Moscow saw the strongest bulwark against a revolutionary movement in Germany, in case the moment for a violent revolution should ever come. Before his arrest Skobelev had been seen in places where his presence could have been least expected on the basis of his official duties. He was an intimate friend of Stalin; and the request for his exchange came as the direct result of pressure from Stalin. The exchange was finally allowed, but only after serious tension and endless bickerings back and forth.

Such bickerings, like so many others of similar nature, absorbed all the energies that might have gone into the perfecting of relations. They filled in the period of the "temporary arrangement" with unpleasant episodes. That indeed was their purpose—there can be no doubt on that point. They were deliberate counterthrusts at the development of any Russian understanding with bourgeois Germany. And they were followed by other episodes such as the arrest of the German consular agents in the Caucasus—inconvenient observers of what was going on; just as any observer in
Berlin, 1930

SOVIET RUSSIA

Russia must eventually prove inconvenient to the Party and the "authorities of the Interior."

Finally came the great explosion—the "Schachty Case," in 1928. This prosecution involved German engineers and plant-installers; and it was instituted for the simple reason that German labour had not been altogether without results in Russia. The point was now to discredit the prestige which foreign, bourgeois talent was gaining in the country, and at the same time to deliver a telling blow at the Rapallo Treaty. A gigantic Press campaign against German business as represented in its most prominent enterprises in the Soviet Union, attended this monstrous and hysterically conducted prosecution.

RANTZAU'S ATTITUDE

Some time earlier Rantzau had let fall the phrase: "The charm is off!" A phrase worthy of the eighteenth century, but not uttered by a sensitive spirit! In private the Count expressed his true meaning in very "Potsdamish" language indeed. "I cannot make up my mind whether this is a lunatic asylum run by jail-birds, or a gang of jail-birds run by lunatics!" Down to the end of his days he was too proud to confess his disappointments aloud. But his conduct in intimate intercourse with the Russians changed. Down to November, 1927, he had striven to live up to the fiction that the breaking of ever so many window-panes would not lower the temperature in the air-castle of Rapallo. In connection with the Tenth Anniversary celebration in Moscow in 1927, in the presence of the President of the Council of People's Commissars and the War Commissar in particular, the Soviet government saw fit to bestow the highest order of the Red Army on Max Hölz for his services to the Revolution in Germany! Hölz had led the bloody revolt instigated by Moscow in Central Germany in 1923. Rantzau at last thought that the limits had been overstepped! And he asked Berlin to demand an unequivocal apology. He now considered that the Rapallo structure could be saved only if the boundaries to Revolutionary caprice as regarded Germany were definitely set on this occasion. The patience Germany had exercised previously had evidently been interpreted by the Party as an encouragement to the most

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

extravagant provocations. Rantzau feared that if nothing were done now insults so unbearable might next be tried that Germany would have no choice save to answer with a rupture of relations.

Stresemann's reply was so framed as apparently to disavow the ambassador; and the Kremlin observed the fact with gratification. Indeed, the reply gave the impression that the rôles of ambassador and Foreign Office would thereafter be inverted. Rantzau had hitherto been the driving force toward supporting relations. He now thought a purifying crisis salutary. In Berlin, on the other hand, people had grown accustomed to manipulating the relations with Russia as a constant value in figuring Western pressures. It was an axiom about the Foreign Office that all Western negotiations would be seriously affected by any decline in friendship with Russia. Berlin had no time and no energy left for bothering with the East. At least they thought they could risk not bothering with the East. Rantzau could do what he wished, short of disturbing arrangements in the West! It is significant that when Rantzau left Moscow for the last time, in August, 1928, he had the firm intention of demanding that Berlin face the situation squarely. When he departed not a single representative from the Central European Division of the Foreign Commissariat appeared at the station. Such an oversight had never occurred before. The Schachty Case, an increasing and forced response of the Foreign Commissariat to the ideas of the Party, had given rise to vigorous altercations, and Rantzau had never wielded such a sharp-cutting blade. Routine intercourse with the ambassador was now being conducted in an atmosphere of constant friction. Rantzau finally saw himself obliged to insist on a "manner of speech customary among civilized nations." He noted with grave concern that for three years previous the Party had been gaining leadership in all the spheres where the foreign policy of the Soviets was showing initiative—especially the great enterprise in China that was to serve as a battering-ram against England. And had things not been brought to the verge of a break with England, by the open encouragement and support of great strikes? Would it not, in the name of Max Hölz, be possible

SOVIET RUSSIA

for the same forces which had thus given striking evidences of their power and their infatuation to be used successfully for the destruction of Rapallo? Could the Schachty Case be dissevered, as so many similar events had been severed, under guise of an "incident," from the "generalline" of Russian policy?

In September, 1928, Rantzaу suddenly died. A tragic death! He was still writing letters a few hours before the end. Friendship between the German and the Russian peoples ought to flourish in spite of everything, he was saying. During his last days he feared lest some ill-advised caprice in Germany might use the Hölz incident to let Rapallo lapse and to dig anew the historic trench along the Eastern frontier. How to save that friendship in the rising flood of "incidents" had become the question of the day, a question of immediate action suited to the facts as they were at that moment. And that was left for the epigones of Rapallo!

Rantzaу had endeavoured, standing on uncertain ground, to force a great ideal upon a hostile and stubborn reality. He had been trained in a school that thought of diplomacy as a game, to be played with fixed rules, or, at any rate, with pieces of settled values. But the government to which he was accredited was ever shifting its centre of balance under his very eyes. The Party outgrew the government by far. From the NEP that had been so promising sprang the new Revolution, which is still driving forward toward pure Socialism with vigorous *élan*. Only the power of the G.P.U., the controlling instrument of the Party, remained consistently the same. In the G.P.U. the currents of hatred raging in the Party joined with the currents of power exercised by the Executive branch of the State. The G.P.U. is packed with Poles, who hate Germany both as a bulwark of bourgeois Europe and as a national enemy, and it follows, if it does not lead, the impulses of the Party. The plague of "incidents" was arranged for the Party by the G.P.U. But since Rantzaу believed firmly in the community of Russo-German interests, the decision to do anything that would openly compromise his policy and lend support to its enemies in Germany, was a most difficult one for him to make. At the same time he must have seen, after his many experiences, that the Kremlin

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

people showed signs of sensitiveness only when called to public account and held up before the gaze of the world—because that unmasked them in the places where they were operating under sheep's clothing. A most embarrassing dilemma! In any event those who believe that Rantzaу was ever inclined to meekness before Moscow's acts of hostility to Germany are doing him a great injustice. He always hesitated to compromise friendly relations by open scandal. But in the last analysis, one must believe, he was ready for scandal if scandal were necessary to save them!

THE NEGOTIATIONS OF 1928

In November, 1928, two months after Rantzaу's death, a German Mission was sent to Moscow to discuss a "clarification and definition" of the "treaty-structure" of 1925. A mountain of documents was taken along as proof of arbitrary interpretations of the various provisions in the treaty on the part of the Soviet authorities. The initiative in this effort came from German business men.

The Soviets, as they always do in cases of complaint, at once took the offensive—what else could they do? It may sound fantastic—but nevertheless, far from admitting the German grievances, they saw in the negotiations an opportunity to make definitive, in the direction of their revolutionary Socialistic ideas, certain propositions that had hitherto been vague as a matter of law if not as a matter of practice. This all corresponded to the radical state of mind in which Soviet policy found itself at the time. It was moving in great strides towards a pure Socialism freed from all traces of the bourgeois system; and, as consistent as ever, it was bent on doing so all along the line.

These negotiations for the overhauling of the treaty of 1925 will have a permanent historical value for the light they throw on what had been taking place previously. They led, in point of fact, to that balancing of accounts in Russo-German relations for which the Germans kept pressing all through the year 1929—and with scant success. It became apparent that Berlin had thought, as in earlier cases, that it could apply Western routine to the extraordinary situation in the East.

SOVIET RUSSIA

So little had a clear conception of the conditions, under which the relations officially existing had to be affirmed, penetrated to the Central Office at Berlin! The chief of the German delegation had shone brilliantly at Paris in negotiating the Franco-German commercial treaty. What happened in Moscow was that, as the result of its effort to "make things clearer," the German government lost any right it may have had to protect German concessionaries in Russia! A monstrous absurdity—as absurd as the contention of the Russians that, legally, concessions' contracts constituted "sovereign acts" not falling under existing treaties. At every point the German representatives ran aground on Soviet "principles" which eliminated any common ground for the discussions desired. They had been instructed, for their part, not to "endanger relations." To negate the "principles" in question, they would have had categorically to negate the relations of friendship, if not of "normal" intercourse. Under these circumstances one could hardly draw a distinction between what was possible and what was not possible. If friendship had to be maintained at whatever cost, why then, in the last analysis, everything had to be possible! Rantzau's forceful personality, in its day, had served to a certain degree as a check on extravagant demands from the Party. That resource was no longer available now, and it could not be replaced by hardworking office routine. Berlin, meantime, had its hands full, and more than full, with the West, where matters such as the future of the Dawes Plan and the evacuation of the occupied territories were approaching a new decision. For Western purposes Berlin had to have Rapallo—a tree that bore no fruit, but which could still be seen. That Russo-German relations existed was the fact that counted—the question as to what they amounted to could be overlooked for the moment. Of course, this was evidently a reasoning which could be followed only on the topmost heights of German diplomacy; and even there it was not felt to be entirely convincing. There was always, to be sure, the consolation that sooner or later Berlin would be able to centre on the Eastern problem, and then see! All of which was only another way of saying that German helplessness was complete.

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

It was apparent to everybody now, that whatever severity Versailles seemed to lose in the West, it regained in the East. Versailles had driven Germany into the arms of Russia. But the true meaning of the peace treaty was showing its full force in the relations of Germany with Russia.

The German delegation arrived in Moscow under the impression that the Soviets were on the road toward eliminating, as far as they could, any German business relating to Russia on German soil. This policy affected the German wholesale trade, primarily. Overstepping the Commercial Treaty, the Foreign Trade Monopoly was perfecting its own organizations in Germany in the form of subsidiaries to Soviet concerns in Russia. Before the War "Germany's arm had reached to Vladivostock. Now the Soviet arm is reaching to Cologne!" The arm now handled all transports for Russia originating in Germany and all banking, insuring, buying and selling of Soviet goods at wholesale, and even at retail—Soviet oil had its own filling stations! The Soviet government, furthermore, had started a vigorous campaign of dumping of Soviet manufactures, in order to deal with the Union's difficulties in meeting obligations abroad. All that German industry could say, in view of this, was that it had supplied the weapons for such procedures, and was continuing to supply them. The German Delegation simply found its apprehensions confirmed in the longwinded and many-sided conferences it held. It saw itself confronted by an utterly obdurate, an utterly ruthless, will—and that will resided not so much in the government as in the Party! The Soviet negotiators evinced a demeanour of mingled dejection and stubbornness. They were called every day to the Politburo, the head of the Party, to get their instructions; and the instructions were always that Germany could "take it or leave it," as she chose!

REVOLUTION VERSUS SECURITY

On May 1st, 1929, at the parade in the Red Square at Moscow, War Commissar Voroshilov delivered a speech in the presence of the German ambassador and the rest of the diplomatic corps. The speech was an attack on the bourgeois

SOVIET RUSSIA

government in Berlin ; and it hailed the (alleged) decision of the proletariat of Berlin to celebrate May Day in spite of the German government's prohibition, and to assert its right to do so in the public streets by violence, if necessary. This announcement proved true to a certain degree. Barricades had actually been erected in Berlin at the time when Voroshilov made his speech. While there was shooting in Berlin, there appeared in Moscow, before the eyes of that august assemblage of diplomats, a carnival car representing a German cruiser, with caricatures of the leading German statesmen, and insulting inscriptions. A few days later it was announced that the violent street demonstrations of the German proletariat would be repeated on August 1st. In August, 1928, the congress of the Third International (the Komintern) had met in Moscow. It had decided that the "period of stabilization" of European business, which was supposed to have begun in 1924, had come to an end, and especially in Germany. There would now follow a period of better prospects for the World Revolution. With that in view, a plan of action for the coming years was laid before the congress, and duly adopted, with a few modifications, by a smaller group, the following March. The May riots in Berlin and Paris were the first fruits of the plan in question.

Contemporaneously with Voroshilov's speech a gigantic campaign of agitation against Germany of which no notice was taken in Berlin, was set in motion throughout the Soviet Union. Newspapers in the remotest nooks and corners of the country were supplied from Moscow with suitable "information," catch-words, and suggestions for caricatures. There were parades, proclamations, "rallies," against the "blood-soaked government of Germany." To be sure, in the light of the things the Party had been doing since 1922, there was nothing particularly surprising in all this. It was merely "carrying on." And it was natural, altogether natural, that the comprehensive instructions sent out to Party members should explain that a break with Germany would have no great significance. It might have, in the economic field—but even there the disturbance would be temporary! In the Narkomindel remarks were dropped in the same sense, though

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

not within hearing of Germans. The United States and England would step into Germany's shoes and give the credits—England would soon be according a renewal of relations! Such the basis for the Soviet witticism that the Anglo-Saxon Powers would, without knowing it, be financing the future triumph of Revolution in Europe.

For that triumph the Party was striving with all its might. It was in control of the situation. China had already been left far behind—Germany was now the lever with which the world was to be pried off its hinges! And yet not all the cards were laid on the table! In Moscow, to-day, revolution is a science, an activity of a general staff. The technique of riding on two tracks has been developed to great perfection. Everybody in Moscow knows that the tempo of an historical process can never be calculated down to the minute!

Some weeks after that First of May, while Tchitcherin was at Baden-Baden, in Germany, he wrote a letter to the Politburo, predicting a complete destruction of Russo-German relations if things continued in the style of Voroshilov's speech. That was no news for the Politburo! But the letter was the end of Tchitcherin. For that matter it had long been apparent that he belonged to a remote past! Stalin was in immediate control in the Narkomindel! In September Litvinov addressed a sharply worded complaint to the German government, which he also gave to the Press—Germany had taken over the protection of Soviet interests in Manchuria; but she had not given adequate protection to Soviet citizens held by the Manchurian authorities! One may doubt whether such a reproof had any precedent in the history of diplomacy!

Two months later, in addressing the Soviet Union Congress, Litvinov spoke in glowing terms of Russo-German friendship. The speech caused great satisfaction in Germany. But had Litvinov intended to insult that friendship in the eyes of the Party and of the world at large, what better device could he have chosen, in view of all that had taken place, than to specify just what it had amounted to? All the friendship that the Soviets have shown toward Germany has had the same double-faced purpose as this brazen expression of it.

SOVIET RUSSIA

Litvinov's pronouncement had its good place and its good reasons in the artfully compounded system of Soviet diplomacy. At that moment in domestic policy a certain tiny amount of NEP was still being tolerated. In the same way in foreign policy, a certain space had to be reserved for "normal" diplomatic relations with bourgeois countries; and also therefore for the relations with Germany which were stamped with the word "friendly"! The "temporary arrangement" was still in force, though revolutionary hopes, now strengthened, were trying to do away with it! Germany, indeed, could "take it, or leave it"!

For that matter, the Party's dictum as to the relative unimportance of a break with Germany corresponded to an opinion generally prevalent in Stalin's Moscow. In its heart of hearts Moscow no longer expected anything from "friendly relations" with anybody anywhere. The maximum of what might be achieved along the line of assiduous cultivation of the bourgeois world, such as had been practised just before and just after Genoa, was nothing as compared with the results to be achieved by the vigorous methods used by the Foreign Trade Monopoly in dealing with the urgent requirements of Soviet economy. Moscow could best get along by dumpings, West and East, by closures of markets over access to which it held control (as in North Persia), by exploitations of declining prosperity in the capitalistic countries, and extreme exploitations of competitions among the various nations, even at the expense of lasting funds of goodwill in world markets!

In view of its revolutionary activities Moscow could not count on any great growth of goodwill. It had greater faith than ever, meantime, in the ultimate success of those activities. It also believed in their pre-eminent importance. It had to feel that way; for only a victory for the Revolution could forestall the inevitable coalition of the capitalistic world against the First Socialist government in history! And only a victory for the World Revolution would be capable of creating a condition where the economic resources of the world at large could be brought into free exchange with the Socialist system of Russia! All these calculations, first

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

enunciated in the dogmas of Lenin, were more acutely real than ever in Moscow's eyes in 1929. In the harsh retort of the Narkomindel to Kellogg's note on the troubles in Manchuria these sentiments came clearly, if only momentarily, to the surface—they were expressed, that is, not toward Germany only. Of course, the revolutionary General Staff in the Komintern had no great reason to give them wide publicity—quite the contrary! It was better as a general line of action to profit by the fact, which has always proved so profitable, that the West comprehends, and is willing to comprehend, the inner essence of Soviet diplomacy, but slowly, very slowly! For the West has long since lost any faith in the positive efficacy of ideas upon statesmanship. How could it realize the rôle they are playing in the schemes of Moscow?

All these motives made themselves felt with redoubled force in the case of Germany, in view of Germany's situation as a result of Versailles, and of internal developments in the Soviet Union.

The paralysis of everything issuing from Rapallo was, thus, from the very first congenital and organic. The struggle of a distinctly patriotic diplomacy in Germany to build up a friendship with a country dominated by an egocentric programme, and inspired by a deep-seated hostility, had something heroic about it, thanks to the devotion of a few individuals on the German side, who felt the matter passionately and were, moreover, patriots of the larger magnitudes. When they passed from the stage, the creative impulse behind Rapallo vanished and disillusionment was left in full control.

Nevertheless the good grounds for the Rapallo policy, which was designed to create from humble beginnings in business relationships between two governments a lasting friendship between two great peoples, are just as good as they ever were. And, in fact, history has by no means decided that the verdict of the Kremlin that the Komintern idea is superior to the idea that led Germany to Rapallo, is the sounder. As things stand to-day, Germany can do nothing more than assert the righteousness and equity of her conception against the ruthless idealists who rule across the

Berlin, 1930

SOVIET RUSSIA

Russian border. It must be a sober, a painstaking effort of uncertain success. But it must be made.

BERLIN-MOSCOW, 1931

There is a natural impulse in all of us to see in anything that happens in the Soviet Union the beginning of a new era, a returning swing of the pendulum. But, unhappily, the Soviet Régime has followed a straighter course than any other Government after 1918. It is forced to do so, as we have said many times, and it will continue to do so in the future.

German-Soviet relations have gone on developing logically during the past year. The Soviet system in the form of the Soviet Trade Monopoly has still further expanded its activities in Germany, endeavouring, as always, to transplant to Russia any industries of interest to Russia which had hitherto been in the hands of Germans. The fur trade and the tanning industry for Soviet furs in Leipzig are the most recent instances of this. This trend has remained unbroken in spite of many diplomatic conferences and the efforts of special commissions.

During the year 1931 Soviet Russia strained her credit possibilities in the United States to the limit, and perhaps beyond the limit, as evidenced by the heavy discount on Soviet promissory notes which developed simultaneously with this offensive. At the end of the year the Soviets turned away from the United States. They had reached the end of the rope. The world-wide slump in the prices on world raw materials had resulted in huge losses for them, and they knew that they had to make retrenchments. They retrenched, but they used that awkward contingency, as they use every contingency, for political purposes: to show the United States that recognition was necessary if American trade with Soviet Russia were to prosper; and, subtly, to whet America's competitive spirit *vis-à-vis* of other countries. The manœuvre met with considerable success. American industry was feeling the pinch of depressed markets. When, in March and April, Soviet Russia entered the most serious financial impasse she has ever experienced, her efforts were discreetly seconded by American firms which had reason to expect that the Bolsheviks

GERMANY'S EXPERIENCES WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

would in due time take up the goods they had ordered in 1930. In March negotiations between the National City Company and Soviet representatives were begun in secret with a view to compensating the National City Bank and its bond-holders for losses they had sustained in Russia during the Revolution. The famous prescription of old Doctor Stalin! When it is a question of credits we talk of debts!

The Soviet government in the end escaped the very serious deadlock that was looming in the spring of 1931. One may doubt whether Germany understood the rôle she actually played at that moment. She was most anxious not to lose her position in Russian trade, which seemed to be endangered by American competition. Certainly, that crucial juncture again made strikingly evident how important it is that capitalistic interests to the West of the Communist frontier should keep each other more precisely informed as to what is going on in their respective camps in regard to Soviet Russia.

In March a "delegation" of German manufacturers went to Moscow. At last! The Soviets had pressed the Germans again and again to follow the example of other nations and pay their respects to the "Experiment" in this spectacular form, so well calculated to inflame appetites in other countries, and, as has been proved again and again, the most inappropriate method for getting reliable knowledge of things Bolshi-Soviet.

News of the Delegation was flashed over the whole world at once, accompanied with an announcement that huge credits were to be granted to Soviet Russia by Germany for buying machinery and other equipment necessary to the Five Years' Plan. The world's response was instantaneous. The ghost of a German monopoly of Russian trade materialized before the eyes of all Germany's competitors, but especially in the United States. Now, the "huge credits" turned out to consist of 300 million marks—sixty millions less than were granted in 1925, when Germany hoped that amount would be "a starter" toward increasing "volubility" in her trade relations with Russia! On that background the figure discussed to-day, a full six years later, deserves serious pondering.

In February, 1928, Rondsutak and other high Soviet officials

SOVIET RUSSIA

went to Berlin and demanded, under veiled threats, which did not omit allusion to huge offers made by American bankers, that Germany grant a credit which under no circumstances should be under a billion marks. At the time the Germans offered much less than that, though they were willing to shoulder more than they would be now. The offer was refused by the Soviet representatives.

There is no doubt that the present German credit is of a political nature more than anything else—and the statement remains true whatever the economic condition of Germany may be at this moment. Germany continues to trust in the magic effect which potential assistance from the Soviet Union in the diplomatic field—a potency that has never yet been actualized—may have on Germany's serious international problems.

CHAPTER II

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

THE WAYS OF SOVIET-COMMUNISM
(Washington, 1931.)

During the years 1930-31, the necessity of rushing forward as rapidly as possible to a Socialization as complete as possible of the Soviet Union, has continued to determine the policy of the Party dictating over Russia. It has continued to demand heavy sacrifices of people in all spheres of Russian life. Again numberless economic entities and numberless human lives have been sacrificed on the altar of Socialism. Russian standards of living have sunk to still lower levels. The chances of talent and competence, as compared with the merits of proletarian origin and Party regularity, have shrunk still further. According to reports of the Soviet government, Russian agriculture enjoyed the most favourable weather conditions in the year 1930 that it had known in sixty years. Had it not been for this, there is little doubt that the tension in the country would have become unendurable. The situation as it was, all but grazed catastrophe. Stalin's battle with the Right Opposition is the best evidence on this point.

THE RIGHT OPPOSITION

The "bumper-crop" of 1930 was a heavy blow to the Right Opposition. It prevented Rykov and his followers in the Party from finding encouragement and support enough to break Stalin's tempo and perhaps even to overthrow him. The Party "Machine" was easily able to present the good harvest as the result of progressive "collectivization." The Opposition risked everything on disputing this contention. It struggled desperately to show that in view of the hasty disturbance of the traditional forms of agriculture it would have been, as it would still be, impossible under normal

Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

conditions to attain even an average harvest. It was alarmed at the annihilation of the efficient peasantry, the so-called *kulaks*, at the bureaucratization of farming, and at the inadequacy of experts available for farming. It disapproved of further exhausting the rural populations by low prices on agricultural products and insufficient supplies of goods. It saw with alarm that the money saved in this way was being invested in an industrial "plant" which had to be created from the ground up, without regard to the current needs of 161 millions of people—exactly as though they could stop living for five years. During the first months of 1931 there were many local peasant outbreaks. The Opposition renewed its familiar protest against the vigour with which Stalin's process was being pushed, as calculated to alienate the country from the government.

THE RISK

In the face of this struggle of conflicting views as to the feasibility of Stalin's Five Year Plan, it is not sufficient to consider day by day, as the reports come in, whether Stalin proved right, and to what degree, and the Opposition wrong. Just as significant is the fact that an Opposition as strong as that of the Right managed to hold its own against repressions of all kinds, denouncing what they believed to be the ultimately detrimental effects of the very performances on which Stalin was basing his defence. This Opposition has not diminished either in the number and quality of its adherents, or in the desperate efforts it has been making to get consideration for its convictions, since it sprang into being at the time of Trotsky's banishment in 1928. These facts are significant. Most respected Party members joined the Right Opposition, men who, like Rykov and Kalinin, held high and responsible offices in the Soviet State and had been devoted, self-sacrificing Bolsheviks all their lives long. Unlike the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky, the fight between the Centre and the Right Opposition arises not so much from personal antagonism as from constant and deep-lying differences of opinion, which have been, and are, considered by both sides as vital for the ultimate survival of Bolshevik

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

rule in Russia. This shows that one can be very much pro-Soviet and still against the Five Year Plan and the methods of executing it. All our knowledge of the Soviet complex is bound to be superficial. Only members of the innermost circle are in a position to know the situation, and they carefully guard their understanding of it from the outer world and even from each other. The continuous existence of fundamental divergences in the bosom of the Party as to the key positions of the policy of the Party is a most enlightening revelation of the risks involved in the Five Year Plan. But, meanwhile, foreign observers, almost without exception, are quietly discussing the "success" or the "failure" of the Five Year Plan on the basis of statistical data which the Kremlin sees fit to convey to the world.

However, what determines the concrete character of the whole phenomenon is the risk just alluded to. For practical purposes, for the attitude of the rest of the world towards that giant in the East which is engaged in a give-and-take of terrific violence with Reason and Fate, it is indispensable to bear that huge risk and its complex nature in mind. It is indispensable to bear in mind that the tremendous and chronic opposition inside the ruling Party originates in that very risk. It is necessary to look at the Five Year Plan, not as an interesting example in arithmetic, but as a boiler capable of exploding at any moment owing to overheating by engineers of disputed competence. The outcome will depend very much on the extent to which the battle of opinions inside the Party happens to consume the energies of the Régime as a whole. And this again will depend very much on the amount of pressure which failure and apprehension exercise on the Party, as they have been doing so far. The marks which the burden of the Five Year Plan leaves on the shoulders of the Party, its political repercussions, in a word, will be as valuable—if not more precious—indications of present conditions and of the future as statistics and photographs of mills and factories.

LAST PARTY STRUGGLES

As has been the case in previous years, it has not been

SOVIET RUSSIA

possible for outsiders to follow in detail the struggle which developed within the Party in 1930 in connection with these basic problems of Stalin's "rush" policy. The speeches of the Opposition were kept from the public more carefully than ever. It is certain that Rykov did his utmost at Party meetings to obtain a reprieve for the independent farmers at least. Toward the middle of the year, however, he, in company with others, had to make a public apology, and, of course, in the form, now become commonplace, of a promise "not to be mistaken again." Such a promise can easily be kept in Soviet Russia by strictly following "the general line of the Party," which, for its part, can never be mistaken, and which is represented by Stalin! This after his first self-execution in the autumn of 1929 was the second promise of the kind that Rykov had made, a preposterous, nay, incredible, fact which, for the most part, escaped the impressionistic commentators of the Press abroad.

After this new triumph, Stalin seems to have had no inclination to make his predominance any more obvious than it already was. He did not insist on Rykov's resignation. But six weeks after the apology alluded to, Rykov, Bukharin and Tomski addressed to the Politburo a memorandum showing that a famine would be unavoidable in the near future unless the current policy were mitigated. A specialist formerly employed by the Soviet government in prominent posts, and a well-known authority on agricultural matters, Professor Kondratiev, collaborated on this memorandum. He disappeared, a martyr to his convictions, into the hands of the G.P.U. and he is still there. The memorandum also caused the ultimate fall of Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomski. Tomski was once the popular leader of the Soviet Trades Unions—but they have now been completely broken up. Tomski and Rykov, along with Bukharin, after some months of complete disgrace, were finally re-admitted to the Central Committee of the Party from which they had been excluded previously. Rykov, in fact, became Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs, but this too is a non-political post in every sense. However, that Rykov and his friends somehow managed to come to the surface again, and other men of the Right Opposition

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

with him, shows to what extent the undercurrents in the Party working against Stalin's policy are holding their own, and how deeply Stalin is impressed by the danger of overheating the boiler.

NARROWING THE CIRCLE OF POWER

In proportion as Stalin's power has increased since Lenin's death, the circle about him has narrowed and narrowed, and, we are constrained to note, in the quality, as well as in the number, of the individuals on whom he can rely, and whom, therefore, he is willing to appoint to positions of responsibility. This has long been the outstanding fact in the development of the Soviet dictatorship; and it is important here to observe that the process is still continuing. This narrowing of the support which Stalin has at his disposal for his active policy is keeping step with the development of his forced tempo of Socialization. In order to make this trend of affairs look a little less unpleasant to the Party, the phrase "Central Democracy" was coined three years ago, for a party slogan—at the time it was set over against Trotsky's "Party Democracy." The Party was coming to have less and less influence on its leadership—and that, substantially, was what the slogan "Central Democracy" meant.

But simultaneously we have the picture of a qualitative levelling in the Party leadership.

The first stage in this process ended early in the year 1928, when Trotsky, Radek, and the gifted and upright Rakovski, were sent into exile. Nothing could be more typical than the fact that when Stalin, in 1930, came to choose a successor for Rykov—which meant also for Lenin—in the Premiership of the Soviet Union, he could find no better man than Molotov, a loyal, but narrow-minded, henchman of his own, who had been previously one of the higher Party secretaries. Molotov is a crude and, in native talent, an insignificant person. In the Party itself the more intelligent members have always had very scant esteem for his capacities. Another characteristic trait: when Stalin withdrew from the Komintern, it was Molotov who replaced him!

To the chairmanship of the Supreme Economic Council
Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

Stalin appointed Ordjonukidse, "War Minister" in the Soviet Republic of Georgia from 1921 on, and executioner of the ill-fated Menshevist Republic—a jovial person, but, as he showed himself in the Caucasus, a man ever ready to shed blood. And the G.P.U., at the same time, made its way into the Politburo—an unbelievable thing, for the Party, since Dzherzinski's death, has always tried to retain its authority over that "extraordinary" body. The fact that Menzhinski has made his appearance in the Politburo means that Stalin's war with the G.P.U., and with certain elements in the G.P.U. favourable to the Right Opposition, as represented by Yagoda, a very strong and very merciless individual, is at an end, or at least has come to a compromise. Now Stalin and the G.P.U. stand together, not only against the country but against any hostile currents within the Party. On the other hand, the G.P.U. probably exerts a moderating influence on Stalin himself. It is perfectly aware of the effects his policy may have upon the country and the Party.

Such is the picture presented to-day by the heirs of Lenin. The great founder was surrounded by a brilliant group of people, who, as late as 1921 and 1922, gave promise that the many-headed dictatorship which the Party was even then enjoying and which was the most original feature of its rule, would be able to maintain itself. But from that lofty platform, which capped the peak of the Party pyramid and was bathed in the full glory of fame, one capable and interesting person after another went down into the lower darkness. To-day the platform is almost empty; and the few who are there are, with the possible exception of Kaganovitch, henchmen of the tiny, sinewy, instinctively shy dictator named Stalin. They became prominent because they were unimportant enough not to arouse Stalin's ever restless mistrust. Kaganovitch, intriguing, strong-handed, intelligent, is seemingly the only lasting discovery that Stalin has made for the service of the Party. He was Stalin's tool against Tomski in the breaking up of the Trades Unions. Syrtzov, a man in his early thirties and at one time also one of Stalin's protégés, became successor to Rykov as Premier of the Russo-Siberian Federal States on the occasion of Rykov's second pledge of infallibility in 1929.

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

He had been doing excellent work in Siberia when he was called to Moscow. Syrtzov was the first individual from the younger generation to rise to the pinnacle of power. To-day he is Stalin's bitterest enemy. He fell late in the summer of 1930. He too had come to the conclusion that Stalin's policy would drive the country to catastrophe. He courageously started public agitation, demanded that Stalin should go, and seems also to have resorted to the "underground" tactics used by the Trotski-ites—up to that time the Right Opposition had consistently eschewed them. He was banished to Turkestan under the pretext of a public assignment.

"OUTSIDERS" IN THE LEADERSHIP

A good Russian was Syrtzov. Good Russians are evidently hard to find, when it comes to filling important posts under Stalin's policy. Most of the Soviet-Commissariats, for instance, are, with the single exception of Molotov, in non-Russian hands. Ordjonukidse, the chairman of the Supreme Economic Council, the organ of the Five Year Plan *par excellence*, is a Georgian. Mikoyan, of the Inner Trade Commissariat, is an Armenian, as also Karakhan, vice-director under Litvinov, at the Markomindel. Litvinov is a Jew. He has lived the greater part of his adult life outside of Russia; and so has Rosenholz, the Commissar of Foreign Trade, in other words, director of the Foreign Trade Monopoly. Stalin, the soul of this whole body, is himself a Caucasian.

That such a situation has arisen shows that Stalin's methods, to a considerable extent, are to be regarded as an engraftment upon the Russian masses and not, as is pretended, a quite natural growth upward or outward from them. The fact may partly explain the severity with which the masses on Russian soil are being dealt with.

TREATMENT OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS

The treatment of workers and peasants has become more severe, as it could only become, along with the development of Stalin's political and economic policy as a whole. Millions of Russian farmers have been relieved of their property and driven into the "Collectives." The process began, as is well
Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

known, in the year 1928, when confiscations of grain owned by the more prosperous peasants were resorted to. Wholesale expropriations and banishments followed. Then these methods were driven deeper and deeper into the Russian peasantry. By 1929 the "middling" peasant, farming on his own property, was being treated, over wide areas of Russia, on the same footing as the *kulak*. The mask was thrown off a few months ago by Yakovlev, writing in the Party fortnightly: "The peasantry," he said, "must be recast into an agricultural proletariat!" The annihilation of all people, not who were, but who were potentially able to become, leaders of resistance to this great, this monstrous, programme, has been carried on apace down to the present moment. *Kulaks*, just because they were labelled so, have been driven off into the Northern forests, to perish, often with their families, with some chance profit to the Soviet export trade in lumber and other commodities. Meantime, among the peasants, and in the "Collectives" especially, a movement towards passive resistance has spread extensively, often in the form of "ca-canny" (literal obedience to orders).

The civil disenfranchisement of the workers has gone hand in hand with gross under-supplying of the necessities of life. People in foreign countries are hardly aware of the amount of dissatisfaction that has been aroused by the destruction of the Trades' Unions, once virtually all-powerful among the "dictating proletarians." These Unions had to be eliminated as a step preliminary to the introduction of a system of compulsion into the organization of labour in the Soviet Union, whereby factory hands and Soviet employees must work where they are told to work, at any kind of work that may be assigned to them, and at wages dictated by the State. This too means passive resistance in many instances.

The rest of the world has become indifferent if not impatient in regard to the fate which has overcome the Russian *intelligentsia* during this last year and especially in recent months. I will not mention here aristocrats, merchants, artisans, or other representatives of our own system dating from the old Russia, and especially not Socialists of the less aggressive brands—they interest nobody, as I have happened to notice.

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

I must, however, speak of the "specialists," of those bourgeois elements who have been putting their knowledge and their experience at the disposal of the Soviet government since 1917, serving in many cases in prominent and responsible positions, and participating in "reconstruction." Such men are now perishing, as they will continue to perish, in the way all others have perished who from the very first failed to grasp the incompatibility between bourgeois manners of thought and feeling and the thinking and feeling and acting of the Bolsheviks. They are all saying now: *qui en mange, en meurt*. Hundreds of so-called "speshes" of all kinds have disappeared during this last year from places in which they had long been working for the Soviet government. Either they have been simply dismissed because a Red professor, a Red engineer, a Red librarian, had meantime grown up out of the ranks of proletarian youth to take their positions; or else they have been arrested on some flimsy charge. The Young Communist Guards not seldom act as informers in such cases. Everything takes place quietly. The G.P.U. knows how to handle these "quiet" cases. Men are arrested. For some months their families are allowed to bring them food and take away their laundry. Then some day they are told: "You need not come any more." Does this mean death, or does it mean deportation? Some day they will find out! Gentlemen of the old school who have been used to create contacts with the capitalist world and to enhance the prestige of the Soviet government as a protector of the high traditions of Russian civilization, have undergone a similar treatment. I am thinking of Ramsen, and others, just here. But Professor Koudraiev disappeared last August. For years he was used and praised as the greatest and most helpful authority on Soviet economy. Professor Yarovski has also vanished. He was a member of the Commissariat of Finance, and well known abroad as a negotiator for the Soviet government in very delicate matters. Professor Lagarev was a world-famous professor of physics. At a time when the Soviet government was still new and much suspected, he represented it at congresses in many countries, indefatigably working to keep up the standards of Russian science, and doing so, as

Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

many believed, in a manner too subservient to the Bolshevik point of view. Nobody could doubt the loyalty of these men, nor their devotion to their work. I mention these three. They are characteristic examples of hundreds, if not thousands, of men who were perfectly loyal but for whom the Soviet government believed to have no use any more and whom it has caused to disappear in this "quiet" way. The government knows perfectly well what it is losing in such men. But the Party's suspicion and distrust have grown beyond all bounds in the course of the years—not a favourable indication of the opinion of the Soviet State as to its own stability. But in the same way old Riazanov perished, the learned Bolshevik of the Marx Engels Institute, and a life-long friend of Lenin. Riazanov, it is true, seems to have combined with the extremist Right Opposition of Syrtzov and put his institute at Syrtzov's disposal for clandestine services. But if a man like Riazanov could not breathe in the atmosphere of Stalin's policy, it is easy to understand why the bourgeois specialists are simply not allowed to. I mention all this destruction of valuable lives for a very simple reason: the reason that nobody else is doing so. Nobody, nobody cares! Now this attitude may be comfortable for those who enjoy it. But I am wondering whether it is either dignified or wise, either for the present moment or for the future.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE "EXPERIMENT" ?

The alternatives we have before us as to the final outcome of the Bolshevik "experiment" as a whole are clear. Soviet Russia is at present in a period of transition to pure Socialism; in other words, to the complete seizure by the State of all economic assets possessed by this Sixth of the Earth's Surface. This transition is perforce a violent one: and, especially as regards agriculture, it destroys many sources of national wealth in Russia—materially, psychologically, and in terms of organization. If, in the long run, progress on the side of Socialist production and organization fails to create greater values than are being destroyed on the side of private initiative, the whole enterprise is doomed. But if the effort to force pure Socialism is successful, and if the friction with the

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

"private sector" of national economy is overcome by uniting the whole Russian Economy under one leadership, then, to judge by past experiences, the prospects of the new system for surviving will be considerably increased. At that moment only will the Socialist experiment, in the proper sense of the word, begin.

The author of this book is by no means of the opinion that the effort for Socialism which Bolshevism is making—this experiment in vivisection on a helpless humanity—must necessarily end in failure. Such Socialistic organization as has been achieved in the past does not admit of so apodictic a judgment, even if the apothegm of Syrtzov should be true that "Constantly we announce plus and always we get minus." In spite of the fact that this gloomy diagnosis holds at the present moment, it remains equally true that the rapid tempo of Socialization has not so far led to a deadlock: it has led, on its negative side, merely to hunger, under-supply, and forced exporting, not to mention the money shortage, that is growing more and more serious. For the last eight months salaries and wages have not been regularly paid. Nevertheless, Stalin's idea that there can be no turning back, that there can be only a vigorous forward, is sound—if Socialism is to prevail in Russia at all. In this lies the weak point of the Right Opposition. If it were to come into power, it too could only drive forward, applying extraordinary measures of constraint. It might temper, retard, graduate; but it could do nothing fundamentally different. That it knows perfectly well.

THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

Present symbol of all this history, all these battles, is the Five Year Plan. The present political struggle in Russia revolves about the Plan. As the Party has decreed, the *Piateletka* has become the sum and substance of political and economic life in the Soviet Union; and—as the Party has also hoped—it has attracted the attention of the rest of the world!

To the World the Plan has been portrayed as a gigantic undertaking to place Russia at the head of the peoples industrially organized within a few brief years. Without
Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

doubt this is an excellent means for representing the Soviet Union to the capitalistic peoples as moved "at bottom" by the same motives and ideals that inspire the civilized world at large. But in so representing it, Moscow intentionally conceals one important point: the very heterogenous inspiration, and the altogether revolutionary purposes, of this Five Year Plan, which, for the rest, is indeed a gigantic undertaking.

This enterprise, too, and the very immensity of it, have been forced upon the lords of the Kremlin. As early as 1926 they could see that private initiative in Russia was failing under the pressure of Socialization, and thereby the very foundations on which Socialization itself had to rest were being shaken. By 1927 this dangerous process had advanced with astonishing speed, and the peasants, in particular, more and more cut off from private trade, were far from delivering what they had to deliver if the system were to be preserved. It was clear that the powers of the country for working had diminished, and were continuing to diminish, rapidly. It was also clear that things could become, not better, but only worse if allowed to go on.

THE PLAN AS "THE ONLY WAY OUT"

The Five Year Plan is the answer to that situation. Only through such a plan could compensation be found for the collapse of private enterprise; and it could not be less comprehensive without leading to national disintegration. The Kremlin was perfectly aware of these necessities; and it did not hesitate a second to act on them.

It was clear, furthermore, that the productive powers of the country could be brought under control only through enterprises of gigantic scope, and that they could be utilized only by a nation-wide organization working on a unified, comprehensive plan that would apply both to industry and to agriculture at the same time. By this procedure and only by it, was there hope of getting hold of the capacities of the country for work, which otherwise would have languished more and more or become actually idle. Of course, such a scheme could be at all promising only under very primitive

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

conditions, susceptible of easy manipulation and remodelling ; but it none the less reflects the conscientiousness of purpose, the courageous resolve, the practical outlook, of the men at the Kremlin. By its vast comprehensiveness, indeed, the Five Year Plan shows that, once on the road to Socialism, the Soviets are compelled to follow it out to the bitter end, without delays, without waverings, and taking the gravest risks. That applies to the Soviet system. It applies also to the personal fortunes of the men who have assumed responsibility for what has been taking place in Russia during these past fourteen years. A Communist deeply involved in the responsibilities in question once remarked to an ambassador from a foreign power in Moscow : " Either we sit in the Kremlin, or we hang from the trees in front of it." So one thing fits into another in accordance with a logic which is working more relentlessly in Russia than logic ever worked before in any other country.

Let us, on our side, face the situation just as logically and in all its aspects. The designer of the Five Year Plan was Kriyanovski, who has already " ceased to be of use " at the Kremlin for this purpose. Grinko, a man most competent on this subject by virtue of his official position, has written of the Five Year Plan : " It is the most important part of the work preparatory to the World Revolution." That is a statement which we must accept, or at least ponder, as made in all earnestness. We have to accept it if we accept the Plan itself as something real. It goes directly to the roots of the Plan and the motives behind it. It is as significant as the Kremlin's promise that " in a few years, wages in Soviet Russia will be higher than wages in Berlin and New York." Or that other prophecy, that " steel production in Soviet Russia will be tripled—before long ! " The author of this book has always paid the Soviets the compliment of taking them seriously in every respect. But he is also obliged to state that they have requited him with scant gratitude.

CAPITALISM AND BOLSHEVIST SOVIETISM

During these ten years of Bolshevik effort, Western Capitalism has gone on its way, beset, unquestionably, by
Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

great difficulties arising from its own structure. But, on the whole, in the countries which have been living under traditional conceptions of social organization, there has been incomparably greater prosperity, better equipment for production, and what is more important still, greater security of living. In the capitalist countries, in fact, enormous reserves have been accumulated. The Soviet Régime, meantime, has been moving from one embarrassment to another. It has passed through numberless life and death crises, springing from the intrinsic nature of its system. It has lived at swords' points with the majority of the population it governs, and even of the "dictating Party" itself. It has nevertheless evinced an attitude of increasing aggressiveness toward the more fortunate parts of the world. Neither in its principles nor in details of policy based on those principles has it at any time made more than the unavoidable concessions. And the capitalistic world has persistently avoided facing the challenge of the Soviet State.

ADVANTAGES OF SOVIETISM

The strength of Sovietism, in this particular contrast, has been the fact that it is building its structure anew, whereas the West and the Far East are completed entities long since constituted. In this struggle with Capitalism the Soviets have always had a great deal to gain, the rest of the world a great deal to lose. They have, furthermore, been in a position systematically to play off against their neighbours the concentrated weight of one-sixth of the earth's surface. They can manage their trade relations under a unified policy, consistently profiting by their ability to drive one purchasing country higher than another, and beat one selling country to lower prices than another. They know, through their information services, all the conditions under which they are buying or selling; whereas capitalistic business is so articulated that even within a given country one business man is in no position to know just what terms another is discussing with the Foreign Trade Monopoly. As compared with the centralization of the Soviet Union, Capitalism, in its dealing with Soviet Russia, is clumsily, even primitively,

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

organized. The governments of Capitalism are bound hand and foot, while Bolshevism is free to act as preference or opportunity may decide. The laws under which government is conducted in Capitalistic countries were never conceived for dealing with the peculiar kind of aggressiveness which Bolshevism offers. One has only to think of the financial support which the Soviet government lends to official or "underground" Communist parties in other countries, or, for instance, of the telegrams in cipher which it exchanges with such parties. Capitalist governments have no mechanism for dealing with the reports which Soviet trading agencies make on the competitive status of their clients; or with the new practices of "dumping" of which Soviet Russia is making lavish use of late. They cannot retaliate in kind to all provocations which the Soviet government sees fit to launch in a definite case, while the Soviet government is able to back any such acts with the power concentrated in its hands. During the very days when Litvinov made his successful proposal of a world-wide economic Non-Aggression Pact, before the tribunal of the League of Nations, the State which Litvinoff represents was giving a good illustration of how it is able and willing to force its will through against other countries.

In the month of April last, the health authorities of Vienna decided that 150 carloads of eggs which the Soviet Trade Monopoly was importing into Austria were spoiled and could not be admitted. This decision the Soviet government answered: 1, by instantly recalling a commission which had been sent from Moscow to buy cattle for breeding purposes in the Tyrol; 2, by halting the work of the Soviet Import and Export Bureau; 3, by giving orders of the same kind to other Soviet organizations; 4, by informing the Austrian government that all trade relations would be severed permanently if the eggs were not admitted to Austria. Need I add that the eggs won the battle on the whole front, after two days only of such skirmishing?

This gives an example of the coercive power possessed by the Foreign Trade Monopoly. It can be used in a lightning-like way. That it cannot be imitated by capitalistic powers is
Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

obvious. Such reprisals, furthermore, cannot be controlled by treaties regulating their application. And we must not forget that such powers of economical constraint can be applied just as easily in the realm of politics. To these advantages one may add those implied for the Soviet Union in the Litvinov Pact: the power of making a concentrated attack in full force—a power that is not within the reach of even the strongest governments in the rest of the world. The proposed Pact will keep down tariffs in other countries. But Soviet Russia will still be able to control the entry of any goods into her territory, through the omnipotence of her Foreign Trade Monopoly in determining just what shall be, and what shall not be, bought abroad. Litvinov's Pact would eliminate cut-throat competitions against Soviet exports by forbidding sales of goods in any foreign country at lower prices than obtain in the country of production. But owing to their centralized system the Soviets can export all their products on the basis of prices which they arbitrarily set themselves, being producer and exporter in one person.

Diplomatic routine, in the past, has never foreseen the case that a great Power might make the overturning of the social and political order of the world a basic principle in its constitution while seeking or cultivating "normal" diplomatic relations with other Powers. The situation prevailing at present between the revolutionary Soviet government and the rest of the world, can be maintained only by a choice on the part of other countries to close their eyes to many things which the Soviet government does. And such good nature is comprehensible only on the assumption that the new ideas so actively and aggressively asserted by the Soviets, are faced by a mere routine more concerned not to make bad matters worse than, at the expense of some economic discomfort, to reply to Moscow's assaults as the latter deserve. This routine the Soviets turn to their own purposes as, and whenever, they see fit to do so. It is convenient for them to maintain official diplomatic missions abroad, and they trust to luck as to just how far things can go before the bourgeois governments protest against the peculiar uses which the Soviet

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

missions in question make of their privileges. Was not the notorious Dr. Goldenstein, who for years had fomented revolution and crimes of violence in the Balkans on behalf of the "Komintern," appointed secretary at the Soviet Embassy at Berlin, where he acted for over two years in the same unofficial capacities as in Vienna? The Soviets rely on the inertia of a bourgeois world accustomed to travelling along familiar roads, and compelled, almost, to remain what it has always been, even though something new is forcing a way into its traditional life. Only an acute crisis can stir the capitalistic world from this lethargy. It would require a serious emergency indeed to rouse it to concerted action—and then, certainly, it would be too late. It is a curious fact that for years Moscow has shown its guilty conscience by living in sincere terror of a "united front" supposedly to be formed by the bourgeois countries. Now the men at the Kremlin are very keen and perspicacious individuals. How is it that they do not see that the mere suggestion of such a "bloc" would instantly unchain most bitter and dangerous polemics in Europe, provoke strained relations between the various countries, and between the political parties within each country, and even social unrest of a most perilous nature?

Looking back on this period from some future date, historians will doubtless find it incomprehensible that the bourgeois world of our time should have paid so little attention to the continuity of the world revolutionary policy of the Soviets, though this has lasted over a very considerable span of years (1918-1931); and so much attention to the NEP, and, later on, to the Five Year Plan.

As to the continuousness of such activity on the part of the Soviets, this volume has already said enough: it is one of the dominant facts in the history of our time. It is being forced against a diplomatic routine which by nature has always tended to make light even of the very things it takes most seriously. I may give just one illustration! In the summer of 1918, Bela Kun, the revolutionist of Budapest, was discovered hiding in Vienna. He had fled from Hungary to Russia in 1918. After Wrangel's defeat he committed such

Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

atrocities in the Crimea that Lenin banished him forever from the Soviet service. But a place was assigned to him in the Komintern; and there he still is. At the time when Bela Kun was found in Vienna, the Austrian government was deeply involved in trade negotiations with the Soviets. It accordingly shipped him back to Moscow; and during the summer of 1929, Bela Kun went on missions to Poland, Germany, and England and was politely received wherever he went. "Getting away" with such things gives Moscow confidence that it will reach its goal some day. I will, for good reasons, say nothing of other secret Soviet expeditions "to explore the ground" as far afield as North and South America.

IMPORT AND EXPORT MORALITY

Moscow is convinced that the capitalistic world, so far as moral and political considerations are concerned, falls automatically into two camps: those industries and interests which are eager to export to Russia; and those business groups which are afraid of imports from Russia. According to the one point of view or the other, either the Soviet "experiment" is "viewed with interest" and with kindly objectivity; or the Bolshevist State is regarded with highest indignation as a plague on humanity.

From this spectacle the Bolshevists gather, as they have pointed out repeatedly, that capitalism has no moral foundations of its own and no powers of resistance against the Communist challenge, except as material motives of the moment provide them. Did not Karl Marx prophesy just that, in his "Capital"? At the same time Moscow draws much comfort from such attitudes in the bourgeois world as liberalism. The original liberal ideas of individual liberty, of free speech, of equality before the laws, they consider as decorative, and nothing more, in the present-day world. The only thing in which the liberal mind still excels, in the eyes of the Bolshevists, is its indiscriminating tolerance—that same tolerance wherewith the old Russian liberalism contributed so lavishly to the Bolshevist victory in 1917. And what sacrifices meantime the Soviet Régime is making for

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

its principles ! What abuses it has to put up with from its antagonists, whom it regards as wholly engrossed in material interests !

WHO IS THE STRONGER ?

Passing allusion might here be made to the fact that to-day there would seem to be as much danger, for Europe and for the world, in a collapse of the Soviet Régime, as in the possibility of its attaining its goal. The East of Europe is already unstable enough. Its political structure is perilously artificial. A collapse of the forces ruling in Russia at present would throw Europe into a whirl of national competitions, appetites, overlapping "claims," not to speak of the anarchy of a duration not to be estimated which would ensue in Russia on a new disintegration in that country. A collapse of the Soviets, given the instability of the Party, its perverse dependence on the life of Stalin, is not merely a theoretical possibility. Yet nothing has been provided for such an emergency. It is, in fact, much more probable at this moment, the year 1931, that the Régime will continue holding its own. And in that case, the question is very much in point : who, in fact, is the stronger ?

The structure of capitalist economy has grown extremely complicated during the period of industrialization ; and since the World War it has become abnormally sensitive through the working of certain special factors. It is altogether natural, therefore, and in the case of Europe necessary perhaps, that the revolutionary aspects of the Soviet problem should be ignored as far as possible. But looking at the matter from the historical point of view, the picture is frightening. In a conflict between a ponderous but very sensitive system, and a young and aggressive system, simply and primitively organized but marvellously coherent, the latter by no means need succumb. The past shows many examples where highly developed civilizations have fallen before such attacks, more often than not dragging its assailants to ruin also.

"FARSIGHTEDNESS"

According to Prince von Bülow, Bismarck once said that
Washington, 1931

SOVIET RUSSIA

in diplomacy farsightedness is more dangerous than near-sightedness. That issue, precisely, is before us now. The Soviet government is fighting against the present for the future. It may be suffering, in consequence, from the defects of farsightedness; but people in other countries should not forget that it has, and will continue to have, very considerable forces at its disposal for making the rest of the world share heavily in those consequences too. Bismarck had not foreseen that one may suffer just as much from the farsightedness of one's opponents! The Soviets are trusting to their ideas, and ideas can be fought only with other ideas. A self-conscious attack can be met only with self-conscious resistance. But how is that possible unless one has gained a clear picture of one's antagonist?

AMBIGUOUS PROPAGANDA

This very antagonist has been successful in drawing his own picture for anyone who may need it! One has only to remember how Moscow has been able to push the Five Year Plan out of its true perspective by a propaganda addressed to the bourgeois world, and not just to factory hands nor to the classes that lie between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Moscow is relying on its past experience: that it can tell one story to the bourgeois, and quite a different story to the proletariat. The bourgeois world is shown gigantic figures, interesting photographs, and, to some extent, an array of liberal principles. The proletariat is shown the declaration of Glinko that the Five Year Plan is a forerunner of the World Revolution! From the fact that this splitting of attention has been getting along so nicely, Moscow draws the conclusion that the different classes in Western society can be wedged farther and farther apart, and that some day it will be possible to set the under-dogs upon those at the top. Moscow may be right in this. At any rate it is resolved to make every effort to determine whether it be right. "The bourgeois ear-drum," remarked one of the men at the Kremlin, "is not the same as the proletarian ear-drum. After all, people in this world hear very much the things they want to hear! We can cripple the one by showing them

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

pretty pictures of profits future or present. We can tell the others just as effectively that, working with us, they can and will get rid of the profiteers."

The bourgeois world does not enjoy looking into the Soviet mirror. Nevertheless there is nothing so fundamentally revealing of the nature of our present-day civilization than the attitude, conscious or unconscious, which the Western bourgeoisie is taking toward what is now going on in Russia.

THE FUTURE OF THE BOLSHEVIST DICTATORSHIP

The Western bourgeoisie believes that the Bolsheviks will come to grief by very virtue of their farsightedness—at least it did believe so, down to the time when the Five Year Plan appeared, though the Plan was as much an expression of increasing need as of the energy of the "dictating Party." This volume nowhere indicates that the author has at any time reckoned on the collapse of Russian Bolshevism as a certainty. And if the question were put to him to-day he would still have to make a complicated answer; that, namely, the death agony may begin to-morrow, or ten years from to-morrow; or instead, that what we may see, may be the death agony of Europe!

Stalin might disappear at any moment—whether through death, or through a victory of his opponents, would make little difference. But his departure, in any event, would mark a terrible, perhaps a fatal, crisis for Bolshevism; for it would at once become apparent how far Stalin has crippled the active forces of leadership in Russia, and how greatly the structure of power has been altered since Lenin's time. It may be that the majority of the Party have been following Stalin for years against their better judgment—if not a majority, a large part certainly; and the higher we go in the hierarchy the lesser the confidence in Stalin grows. Everything has come automatically to centre on Stalin's personality. When Lenin died in 1924 a powerful group was already governing the country in his stead. It was not a unified group—far from that; but its members managed somehow to get on with one another, and the Party looked up to them—

SOVIET RUSSIA

Trotsky was still a popular hero. All that is gone now. The Party, from the bottom to the top, is itself under a dictatorship; and it fears the dictator as much as the remnant of the bourgeoisie fears him; for Party members, all the way up to the top, are watched no less closely by the G.P.U. than the bourgeoisie is watched! Lenin's system was far different from all this. Lenin as a collectivist knew the value of individuality. Stalin's disciplinary system will have the lifetime of Stalin himself—that is the price it must pay for having come into existence at all.

Yet—who in the wide world is paying attention to such vital things, though they may change the face of Europe at a moment's notice? The Soviet Régime is more fragile to-day than it was in 1922. It is balanced wholly on the legs of Stalin, and on his methods. Who is available to hold the reins of Russia as tight as he is holding them? What will become of this frightfully artificial, and frightfully strained fabric, the moment he releases control? When the scramble for the power which he has concentrated in his own hands begins, a reaction against the overstraining of the past years will be inevitable in all strata of the Russian population.

These are the things which one must say if one would discuss Russia in a rational spirit—and one can talk of Russia as reasonably as of any other country. Russia is perhaps less of a mystery than any other country in the world.

THE IDEA.

The Soviet ship of state may be faultily designed, but it is borne along on a rising tide. The Marxian Revolution has instilled that mysterious catalytic of the white man—"the idea"—into numberless Russian heads which had hitherto sought the ultimate sense of life in crude religious symbols of a paternalistic character. It is a fact that to-day Russia is experiencing Platonism, the Renaissance, Industrialism, all in one; and that fact will sever her for a long time to come from the rest of the world, which has moved gradually from one of those experiences to the other in the course of ages. Enormous masses of people were set in motion by the Revolution of 1917. The Marxian revolutionaries who brought

AROUND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

these forces into the open in most brutal ways, have so far escaped the "Thermidor" of Robespierre of which they have always been afraid. Indeed, the forces which they released, they have concentrated and intensified to support their programme and consolidate their rule. This must count as one of the most masterly achievements in statesmanship known to world history. Down to the present time the rulers of Russia have not allowed the masses a moment's rest. They have carried them farther and farther, dragging them along behind them, at first with the slender thread of enthusiasm, and later on with chains of power. And the masses have not revolted, so far—a fact which all by itself will astonish the historians of a future day. Meantime those same Marxians have all along regarded the conquest of one Sixth of the Earth's surface as a merely local affair. Their real thought has been centred on a conquest of the whole world, which in fact they have filled with the idea of a radical Socialism. That too will amaze future generations, even were what we see in Russia to-day to perish to-morrow. It will be an instance of the power an idea may have in the very midst of an age that seems to be wholly engrossed in its material present.

So an unprejudiced future will judge! But it may well be that, sixty years from now, Europe—let us stick to Europe!—will have only Red historians! In that case they will attach great importance to describing in detail just how it came about that bourgeois historiography disappeared along with the surroundings out of which it peeped into the new world. Let us remember that during these decisive years Russia has had only one voice, the voice of her rulers. So strong has their rule been! What the swarming multitudes of the country have really been feeling since 1917, neither a White nor a Red history will ever be able to tell. But in the last analysis the Régime has derived its strength from the energy expressed in the great acrobatic sommersault which the Russian people, in all its many strata, has made over the centuries into the future. Whatever be the end of the Five Year Plan, we shall still be confronted by the danger that at the end of their gigantic leap the Russians may land on our heads!

*Made and Printed in Great Britain
by the Botolph Printing Works, Gate
Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.*

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



124 588

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY